NEW

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

THE RAPID RISE AND FALL OF AN ISLAMIC SUPERPOWER

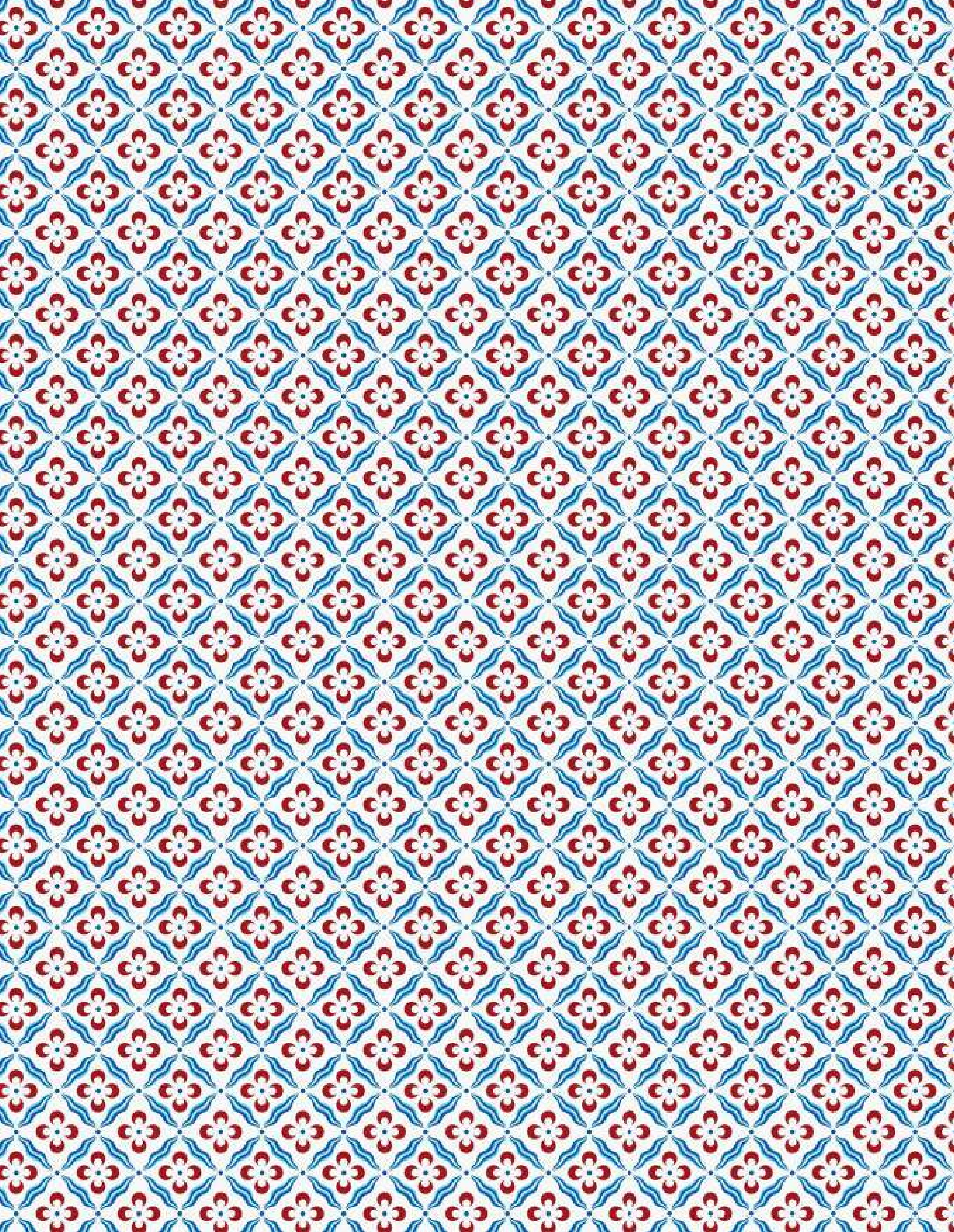
Explore the Turkic empire that spanned three continents

Digital Edition

FUTURE

SECOND EDITION

TRIBAL TO TURKISH ◆ CULTURAL JEWELS ◆ WARS ◆ BREAKDOWN



WELCOME TO THE

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Renowned for their stunning carpets, silken robes and powerful sultans, the Ottomans presided over a golden empire. Trace their history back to their days wandering the Central Asian steppe, before settling in Anatolia and laying siege to the city of Constantinople - prizing it from the Byzantines. See the Empire expand deeper into Asia, Africa and Europe, becoming the thorn in the side of the European powers for centuries. With the House of Osman ruling for more than 500 years, learn how Ottoman customs, costume and culture permeated throughout the world, and what we can still be thankful to the Ottomans for today. Pour over the pages of this book to discover one of the greatest empires history has ever known.

This bookazine is printed on recycled paper. It's important that we care about our planet and make a difference where we can, for us and every generation that follows.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Bookazine Editorial
Editor **Alice Barnes-Brown**
Designer **Andy Downes**
Compiled by **Charles Ginger & Thomas Parrett**
Editorial Director **Jon White**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

Magazine Editorial
Editor **Jonathan Gordon**
Designer **Kym Winters**
Editorial Director **Tim Williamson**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors
Hareth Al Bustani, Mohammed Barber, Alice Barnes-Brown, Melanie Clegg, Kerry Dorsey, Jem Duducu, Nicholas Forder, Marwan Kamel, Scott Reeves, Nikole Robinson, Vanessa Thorpe, Frances White

Cover images
Alamy, Getty Images
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,**
Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman

Management
Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

All About History Book of the Ottoman Empire Second Edition (AHB2962)
© 2020 Future Publishing Limited

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill and printer hold full FSC and PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2020 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

FUTURE
Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Rachel Addison**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Part of the
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
bookazine series

Widely Recycled

ipso. For press freedom with responsibility

CONTENTS

ORIGINS OF THE EMPIRE

08 Timeline
Start here to find out exactly what happened in over 600 years of Ottoman history

10 Who are the Ottomans?
The birth of the Ottomans was rooted in another Turkic dynasty, the Seljuks

12 Osman I
This ruler founded the Ottoman dynasty through a combination of brains and brawn

16 Rise of the Ottoman Empire
The Ottomans conquered land in three continents, forging an empire that lasted 600 years

THE GOLDEN AGE

24 Mehmed II
This sultan formed a superpower by ruthlessly campaigning against an array of powerful enemies

30 Suleiman the Magnificent
How he marched on Europe's heartlands, ruled benevolently and created an Ottoman golden age

38 Battle of Lepanto
Why did the Ottoman fleet disintegrate in this naval battle for the island of Cyprus?

42 Sultanate of Women
How the sultan's harem became the focal point of political power in the Ottoman Empire

48 Inside the Topkapi Palace
Take a tour of the sultan's palace, including government buildings, gardens, and even his harem

LIFE AS AN OTTOMAN

50 Governing the Empire
How the Ottomans ruled on high - and kept the peace despite deep-seated divides

54 A Diverse Realm
Why the Ottoman Empire was a cultural melting pot - and it wasn't just for Turks

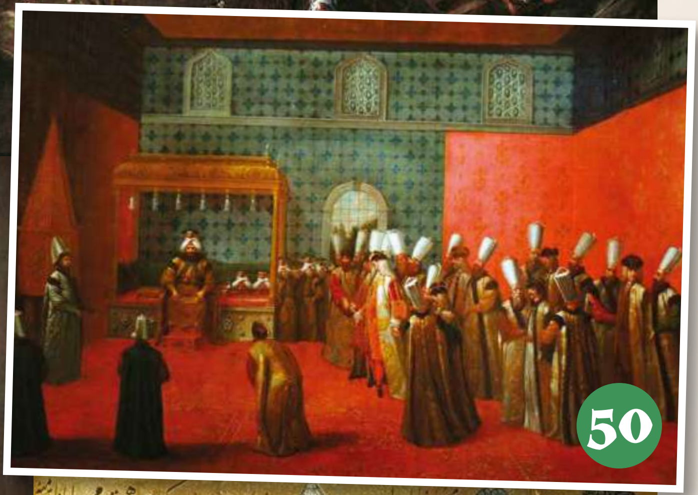
62 Art Gallery
Pour over some of the finest examples of arts and crafts from the Ottoman era

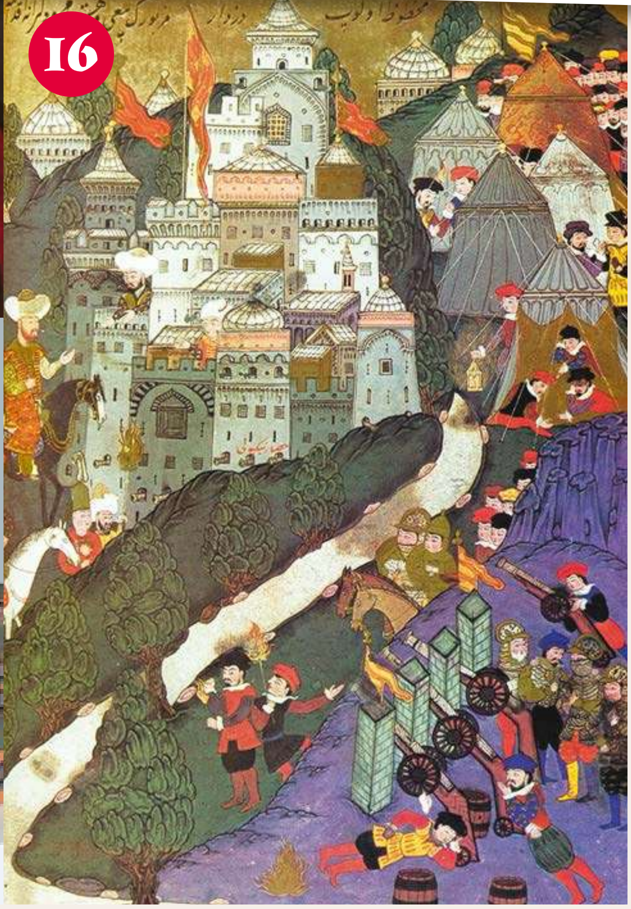
68 Inside Haghia Sophia
Take a look into this Byzantine masterpiece, which the Ottomans converted into a mighty mosque

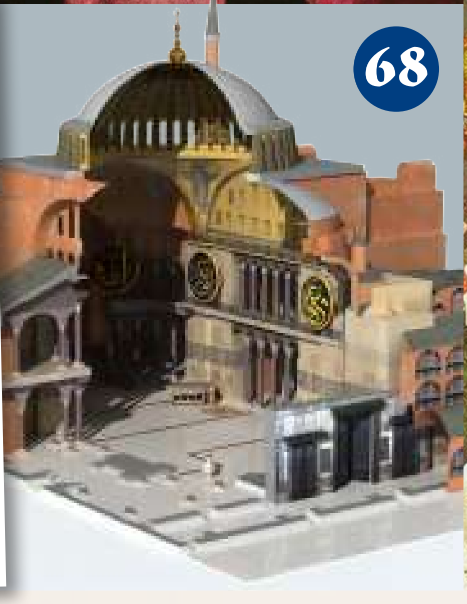
70 Explore Ottoman Mosques
Visit some of the most supreme feats of architecture in the Muslim world

72 1683: Battle of Vienna
Why did the Ottomans fail to capture the apple of their eye, after so many attempts?

76 Rising Nationalism
How Greek independence sowed the seeds of discontent in the rest of the Empire







82 Hall of Fame: Ottoman Rebels
Meet men and women who led their people in revolt against the Empire

84 The Tanzimat Era
Could the so-called 'sick man' of Europe save itself from collapse?

90 The 'Sick Man' of Europe?
Was there any truth in the Tsar of Russia's claim that the Ottoman Empire was the 'sick man' of Europe?

DISSOLUTION AND DOWNFALL

96 Young Turks Break Free
How a group of young intellectuals brought the sultan to his knees

98 Ottomans in World War One
Examine the role of the Ottoman Empire during the Great War

102 The Gallipoli Campaign
Learn why this infamous campaign on land and sea was such a disaster

106 What If... the Ottomans sided with the Allies?
Could the First World War have gone differently had the Ottomans joined the Allies?

108 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk
The man who built his nation from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire

112 Creating Turkey
How modern Turkey arose from its predecessor's ashes

118 Interview: Alev Scott
The author talks us through her journey around the Ottoman Empire's former realms

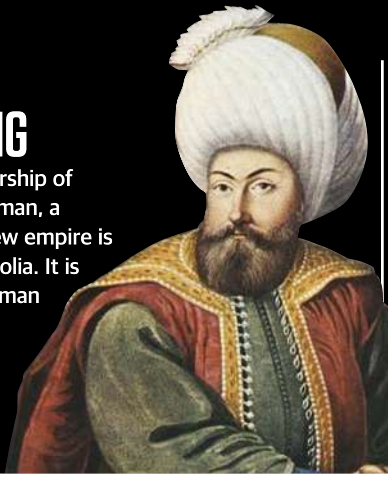
120 The Ottoman Legacy
The world continues to revel in the heritage of the Ottomans

Ottoman Rise & Fall

Positioned at the gateway between Europe and Asia, the Ottoman Empire ruled victorious for 600 years until it crashed and burned

A NEW BEGINNING

Under the leadership of a man called Osman, a Seljuk Turk, a new empire is founded in Anatolia. It is named the Ottoman Empire, after its first sultan who creates the Imperial House of Osman.



C.1299

FALL OF GALLIPOLI

Orhan, son of Osman I, orders a raid the shores of the Sea of Marmara and Gallipoli. The Ottomans take the area, which is their first victory in mainland Europe. More are to follow.

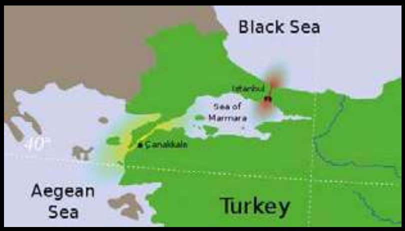
1354

GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Rebelling against Ottoman rule, the Greeks begin a war of independence. The Greeks win the bloody conflict thanks to intervention from European nations.

The sultan finally recognised the Greek state in 1832 with the Treaty of Constantinople

1821-32



LONDON STRAITS CONVENTION

A treaty is signed between the European powers, Russia and the Ottoman Empire to ensure the freedom of transit through the Turkish Straits, connecting the Mediterranean to the Black Sea.

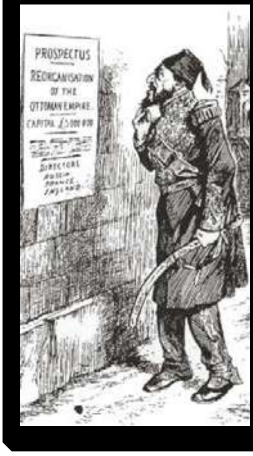
1841

CRIMEAN WAR ENDS

Russia invades the Crimea, which is under the control of the Ottomans. The Turks win, forcing Russia to withdraw, after pulling in other European powers.

1853-56

A SHRINKING EMPIRE


PROSPECTUS
REORGANISATION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.
DIRECTORS
ENGLAND

The Ottoman Empire steadily loses more and more territory, including modern-day Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria. The empire becomes known as the Sick Man of Europe.

1878-1912

BALKAN WARS

Prior to the conflict, the Ottomans hold

169,300 SQUARE KILOMETRES

of land in Europe – most of which they lose in 1913

The wars comprise

2 MILITARY CONFLICTS

fought back-to-back

Macedonia is divided among

3 COUNTRIES

Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria

1912-13

YOUNG TURKS STAGE A COUP

Nationalist revolutionary group the Young Turks take power by force, creating unrest among the empire's many minorities. They try to modernise the Ottoman state but their foreign policy is a disaster.

The Young Turks were founded in 1889 and they wanted a modern, more liberal empire

1913

WORLD WAR I

When war breaks out across Europe, the Ottomans join the Germans. However, things go badly for them during the conflict and they lose hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

1914

AN ALBANIAN HERO

Skanderbeg becomes a national hero in **1443** by organising a rebellion against the Ottomans

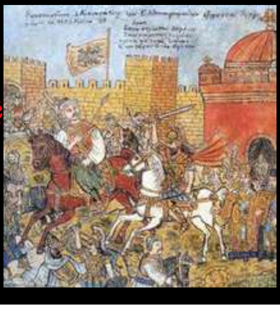
He repels **13** Ottoman invasions over **25 YEARS**

Over **1,000** works have been written about him since in 20 languages

1443-68

INTO CONSTANTINOPLE

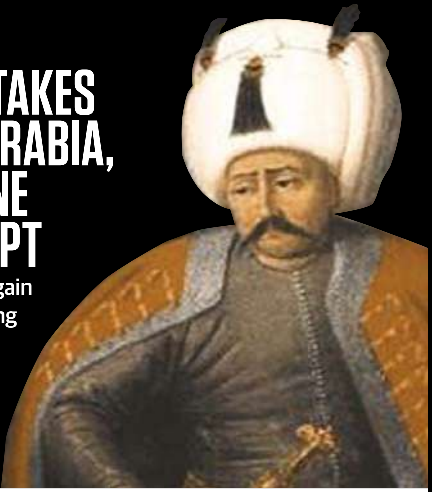
Under the control of Sultan Mehmed II, the Ottomans lay siege to Constantinople, the heart of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. The Ottomans win and make it their new capital.



1453

SELIM I TAKES SYRIA, ARABIA, PALESTINE AND EGYPT

The Ottomans gain more land, taking Syria in 1516 and Egypt the following year under Sultan Selim II.



1516

SULEIMAN THE MAGNIFICENT

Suleiman reigns for **46 years**

He wages war against Persia **3X** bringing more land under his control

The sultan also expands his territory in Europe, becoming **1 OF 4** leading monarchs

1520-66

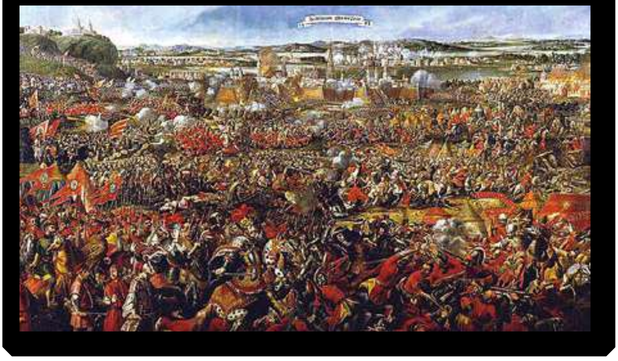
CONQUEST OF TUNIS

With the Spanish Empire holding Tunis, up to 100,000 Ottomans lay siege to the city. The Spanish surrender in November and the Ottomans take over.

1535

BATTLE OF VIENNA

Having tried to invade Vienna several times before, the Ottomans attempt to take the city once more. They are defeated, and they never try to siege Vienna again.



1683

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The facts are still uncertain today, but in 1915, 1.5 million Armenians are killed. Most of those who aren't killed are driven through the hostile mountains and deserts with no food, water or shelter.

1915

THE ARAB REVOLT

The Ottoman emir in Mecca rises up, but claims that he is fighting against the nationalists in Istanbul, not the sultan. The British see this as the perfect time to invade Jerusalem, and they take the holy city.

The British are led by Edmund Allenby, and they captured Jerusalem in December 1917

1916

ROAD TO THE REPUBLIC

The sultanate is abolished on **1 NOV 1922**

The Treaty of Lausanne is signed **24 JULY 1923**

The republic is proclaimed on **29 OCTOBER 1923** with Mustafa Kemal as the new president

1922

© European Space Agency, Interiot

WHO ARE THE OTTOMANS?

The birth of the Ottomans was rooted in the abrupt rise and fall of yet another Turkic dynasty: the Seljuks

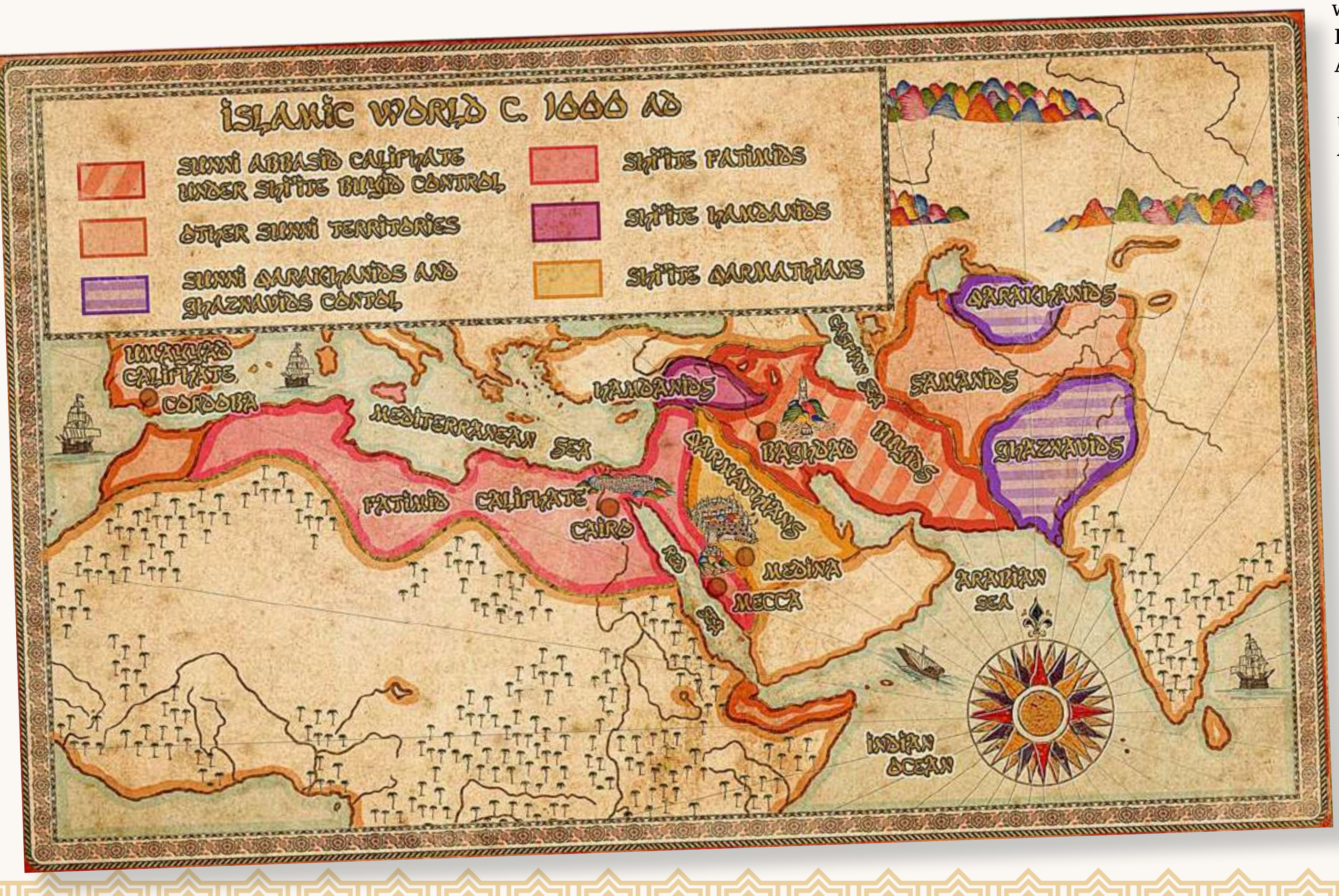
Written by Hareth Al Bustani

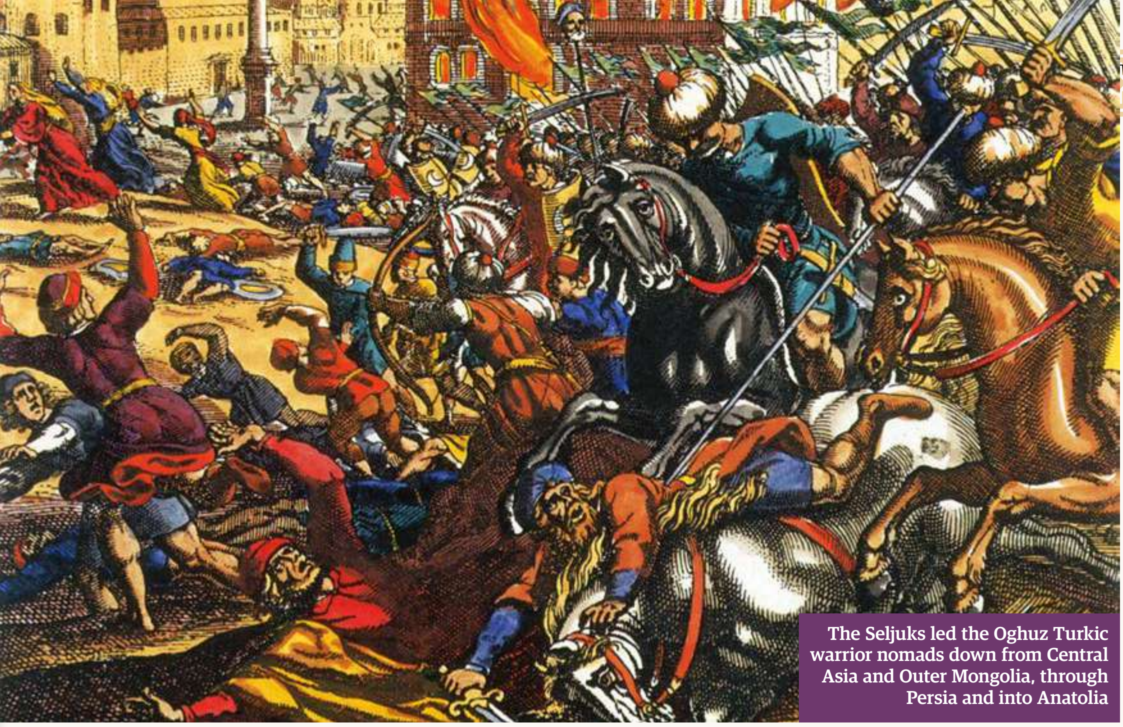
The earliest beginnings of the Ottoman empire can be traced back to the Seljuks, a dynasty of nomadic Oghuz Turks from Central Asia and Outer Mongolia. In the 9th century, Turkic mercenaries began to cross paths with the Arab Muslim dynasties from further west, sparking mass conversions to the Islamic faith. In the 11th century, starved of land and opportunity, thousands of Oghuz horsemen descended upon eastern Anatolia, plundering all the way to Byzantium, before returning to Khorasan laden with spoils.

Later, under Seljuk leadership, they swooped into Persia, which had long seceded from the formerly pre-eminent Abbasid Empire, subjugating the Ghaznavids and establishing control over the Abbasid caliphs, who bestowed the Seljuk leader the title of sultan. When the sultan, Tugril, died in 1063, his nephew, Alp Arslan, defeated his rival claimants to seize the position. After completing the conquest of Persia, he expanded into Azerbaijan and Armenia, before descending on the Byzantine lands of Anatolia – modern Asiatic Turkey.

This resource-rich region, with seven natural harbours, was the heartland of the Byzantine Empire – its fertile land sprouting countless villages, towns and cities, all connected to key Middle East trade routes. It was, by far, the wealthiest part of the Empire – and to Muslims it was synonymous with Rome. They named it Al-Rum.

It was also where, at the Battle of Manzikert, Alp Arslan scored a magnificent victory over a larger Byzantine army, even capturing Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes and enforcing demands on him. As the Byzantines recoiled in shock, fighting amongst themselves, the floodgates were opened and Turkic nomads poured into Anatolia, sparking a social and cultural transformation of the region. As terrified Byzantine villagers abandoned their land, the Turks moved in, setting up a strong base in Nicaea. By 1096, with Jerusalem itself in Seljuk hands, the panicked Pope


ISLAMIC WORLD C. 1000 AD
SUNNI ABBASID CALIPHATE UNDER SHI'ITE BUYID CONTROL
OTHER SUNNI TERRITORIES
SUNNI QARAKHANIDS AND GHAZNAVIDS CONTOL
SHI'ITE FATIMIDS
SHI'ITE HAMDANIDS
SHI'ITE QARMATHIANS
UMAYYAD CALIPHATE
CORDOBA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
FATIMID CALIPHATE
CAIRO
RED SEA
HAMDANIDS
CASPIAN SEA
QARMATHIANS
BAGHDAD
BUYIDS
SAMANIDS
QARAKHANIDS
GHAZNAVIDS
MEDINA
MECCA
ARABIAN SEA
INDIAN OCEAN



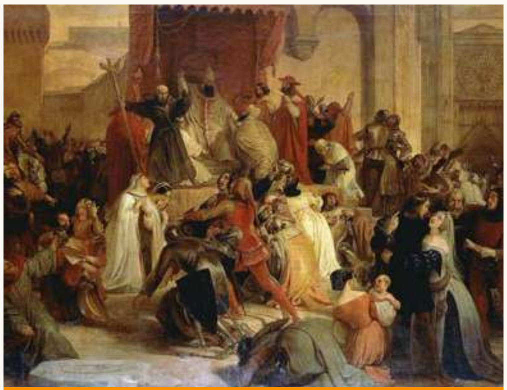
The Seljuks led the Oghuz Turkic warrior nomads down from Central Asia and Outer Mongolia, through Persia and into Anatolia

Urban II announced a crusade, calling on Christian Europe to liberate the holy lands.

The Seljuks were repelled from Nicaea, moving instead to Konya, in central Anatolia. One-by-one, they annexed their Anatolian Turkic neighbours – the powerful Danishmendid emirate towards the north, the Saltukids and Mengucheks in the northeast and the Artukids in the southeast – absorbing a cosmopolitan array of Kurdish, Arab, Greek, Armenian and Jewish residents. The Armenians happily allied with their new overlords, and Kurdish tribal chiefs entered their army. Severed from the Byzantine cultural institutions and seeing no better option, many Greeks converted to Islam and assimilated themselves. Ruling from Konya, the Anatolian Seljuks would later break away from their Iranian counterparts, becoming the Seljuks of Rum, assigning themselves the legacy of Rome.

When Sultan Kilij Arslan II defeated the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus's army in southwest Anatolia in 1176, he not only squashed the Byzantines' hopes of reconquering the region, but gave the Turks a path through to the Anatolian coast, and a bevy of new trade routes. Two years later, it seems he unified all of central Anatolia for the first time, creating a realm the Greeks apparently dubbed 'Turcia'.

By the 13th century, the Seljuks of Rum established peace with their Byzantine neighbours, but this was the calm before the storm. Having defeated the Khwarazmian ruler of Central Asia and Iran, the armies of Genghis Khan steamrolled across the region, razing settlements to the ground and massacring everyone. Those who survived were thrown into the chains of slavery. In their wake, scholars, merchants, poets, mystics, artisans and nomads fled westwards.



When the holy city of Jerusalem fell to the Seljuks, Pope Urban II declared the unprecedented First Crusade

Despite the looming threat, the Seljuks kept building mosques, colleges, hospitals and gardens. Architecture, art and literature blossomed, as Arabic scripts adorned buildings, coinage and deeds, while Persian became the literary court language. This cultural exchange extended to the Byzantines, who had begun to embrace Muslim culture, and, in some cases, were converted to the faith by wandering dervishes.

However, in 1243, after a vicious loss to the Mongols in northern Anatolia, the Seljuks agreed to become a vassal state. A decade later, the Mongol Empire itself would fracture, with the Ilkhanate taking the southwest regions. As both the Seljuks and the Mongols became consumed by infighting, the Mamluks began making their way into the south. By the 14th century, the Seljuk dynasty was on the brink of collapse, and the Mongols would soon abandon western Anatolia in favour of lucrative trade routes in the northeast. In their place, they left a network of emboldened Turkic principalities, or beyliks.

"DESPITE THE THREAT FROM GENGHIS KHAN, THE SELJUKS KEPT BUILDING MOSQUES, COLLEGES AND HOSPITALS"

THE 11TH CENTURY MUSLIM WORLD

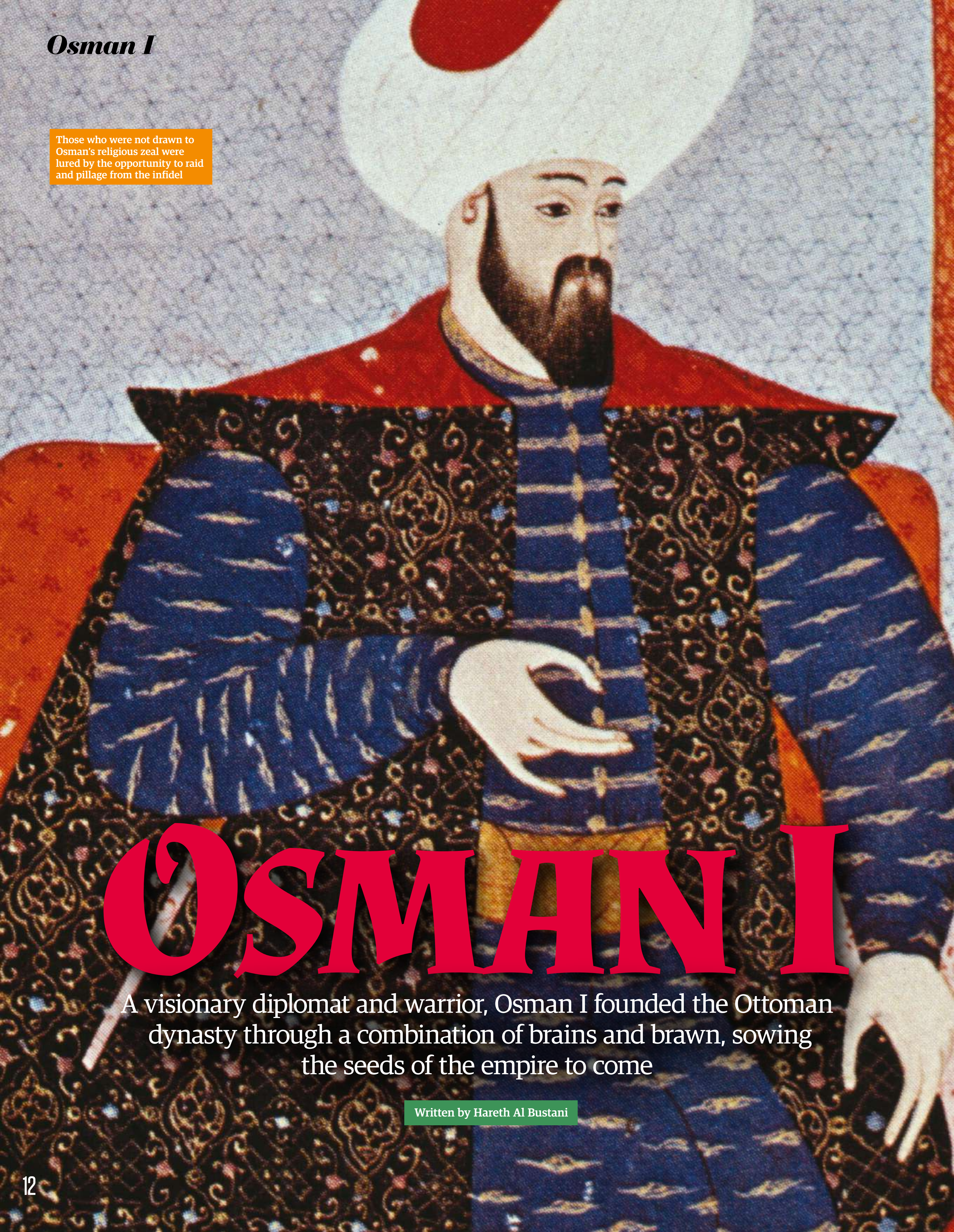
After the fall of the Umayyad dynasty, the Muslim world became a complicated place

Following the campaigns of the prophet Mohammad and his immediate successors, the Muslim world reached its zenith during the reign of the Umayyad dynasty. When they were overthrown by the Abbasids in 750, the empire stretched from Persia to the Maghreb, into Spain. While Andalusia immediately fell to the sole surviving Umayyad Abd al-Rahman, the Maghreb split into independent Berber and Arab domains. Even more disastrously, Egypt and the rest of North Africa were then lost to the Fatimid dynasty, who pledged their loyalty to the Ismaili Shi'a imam, rather than the Sunni caliph. They established a new capital at Cairo, to rival the might and prestige of the Abbasid capital of Baghdad.

Before long, the Abbasids' remaining holdings would follow suit; splintering into subsidiary and breakaway domains. The Qarmatians, a group of Ismaili extremists, emerged from Bahrain, spreading terror from the Arabian Peninsula into Iraq, sacking Mecca and defiling its most sacred monuments. Meanwhile, during the reign of Caliph Al-Mu'tasim, Turkic slaves began to play a more prominent role in the Abbasid military. As central authority broke down across the board, independent Turkic dynasties sprouted up; the Hamdanids in northern Iraq and the Buyids in Baghdad. Further east, the Persian Samanid Empire consumed much of Khorasan and Transoxiana, alongside the breakaway Ghaznavid dynasty and the Turkic Qarakhanids conquerors to the north.

Caliph Al-Mu'tasim's decision to move the Abbasid capital to Samarra handed power to the empire's Turkish military elites

With the region's former overlords crumbling from within, the Turks sensed that it was time for a new order. Soon, Byzantium itself would fall, and a Turk would deliver its death knell – but first, one of Anatolia's own Turkic beyliks would have to emerge supreme. Of the many contenders, up in the northwest, with his eyes fixed firmly towards Constantinople, was a leader who understood better than most what it would take; Osman, chief of the Osmanli; a tribe who would later become the Ottomans.



Those who were not drawn to Osman's religious zeal were lured by the opportunity to raid and pillage from the infidel

OSMAN I

A visionary diplomat and warrior, Osman I founded the Ottoman dynasty through a combination of brains and brawn, sowing the seeds of the empire to come

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

In 1071 BCE the Seljuk Turks overwhelmed the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert, opening up Anatolia for Turkic settlers from Iran and Central Asia, desperate for new land and pasturage. Nomadic chiefs placed tentative roots, paying tribute to their Seljuk overlords while subjugating the local Christian populace beneath Muslim rule. However, by the 14th century the entire region was in a state of chaos. The Byzantine Empire, the torch-bearer of the mighty Eastern Roman Empire, had been reduced to a shadow of its former self, contained to Constantinople, Thrace, Macedonia, parts of Greece and a few coastal ports in western Anatolia. Meanwhile, though the Seljuks had been decisively routed by the Mongols after the fracture of the Mongol Empire, both could feel the region slipping from their hands.

In the absence of strong central leadership the Turkic beys, or chiefs, of Anatolia began to grow increasingly independent. Their beyliks, or principalities, competed for control over the land between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Aegean. Still ostensibly tied to a nomadic past, they were accustomed to life on the move. Constant warfare, raiding and hunting had always been crucial to their survival. However, further west they were beginning to see the benefits of settling down, building monuments and mosques to project prestige and piety. To the far northwest, tucked along the border of Byzantium, was the emirate of Osman - chief of the Osmanli, better known as the Ottomans.

Rather than raiding and attacking his fellow Turks to the southeast, Osman fixed his gaze upon the Byzantine Constantinople

“None could stand in the way of Osman’s fearsome army”

Emboldened by his stellar territorial growth, Osman threw off the yoke of the dwindling Seljuk dynasty

According to legend the Ottomans trace their lineage back to Suleyman Shah, an Oghuz Turk who drowned in the Euphrates. His son, Ertuğrul, was a tribal chief who, fleeing the Mongols in Central Asia, was awarded the northwestern territories around the minor settlement of Söğüt by the Seljuks - along with the right to graze his flocks in the nearby highlands. The true founder of the Ottoman dynasty, however, was his son Osman - a frontier commander who fashioned himself a ghazi, or holy warrior through his campaigns against the infidels, waged from his base of Söğüt.

Amidst the changing order many such warriors had founded their own principalities, paying off the Seljuks or Mongols for the right to relative self-determination. However, with the Turks yet to fully immerse themselves in the Sunni heterodoxy, those who were not sufficiently roused by Osman’s religious zeal were lured to his ranks by the promise of plunder: robbing, enslaving and terrorising non-Muslims.

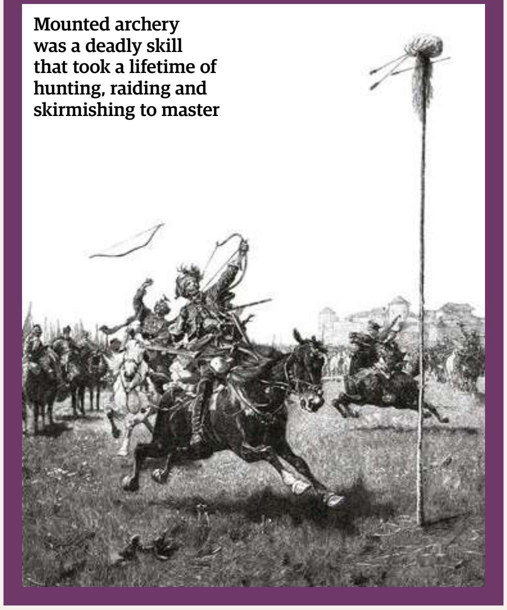
Nestled auspiciously between the fledgling Byzantine Empire, the Seljuks and the Ilkhanate - the southwestern fragment of the former Mongol Empire - Osman’s province naturally drew a diverse crowd. His followers were a ragtag collection of nomads, soldiers, slaves, wandering dervishes, monks, clergymen, displaced peasants, Muslim scholars and merchants, who, like his father, had all been driven west in search of a fresh start - and Osman planned to give them precisely that. However, settling down would be crucial.

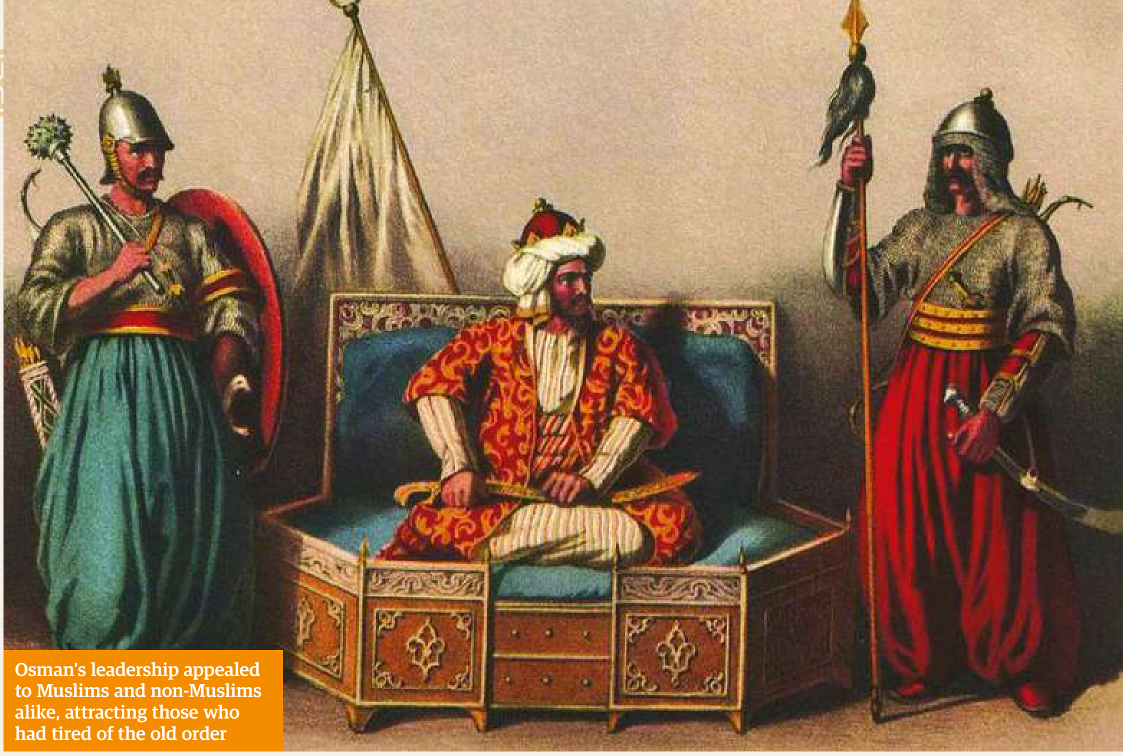
If there was any dissent in the ranks, Osman was quick to deal with it. After his father’s death

Osman’s Army

Osman’s early army consisted of Turkic nomads wielding composite bows made of wood, horn, sinew and glue along with swords, battle-axes, maces and even flails. Most warriors wore leather and woollen thick-padded garments, bolstered only with small circular shields, leather or metal helmets and, for wealthier soldiers, chain mail. Their light armour gave them exceptional mobility, with the commanding unit flanked by two main wings. Osman would have communicated strategies through flags and whistling arrows.

A favourite trick to set up a counter-attack was to have soldiers ride just out of the enemy’s line of fire, lob volleys of arrows at the enemy and retreat, followed by another line. Each cavalryman owned up to three horses, helping the army to keep the tempo up with a steady stream of volleys. The feigned retreat was another favourite, followed by a decisive ambush - aided by an extensive study of the terrain beforehand. Nomadic mounted archers trained their entire lives while hunting, raiding or clashing with neighbouring powers.


Mounted archery was a deadly skill that took a lifetime of hunting, raiding and skirmishing to master



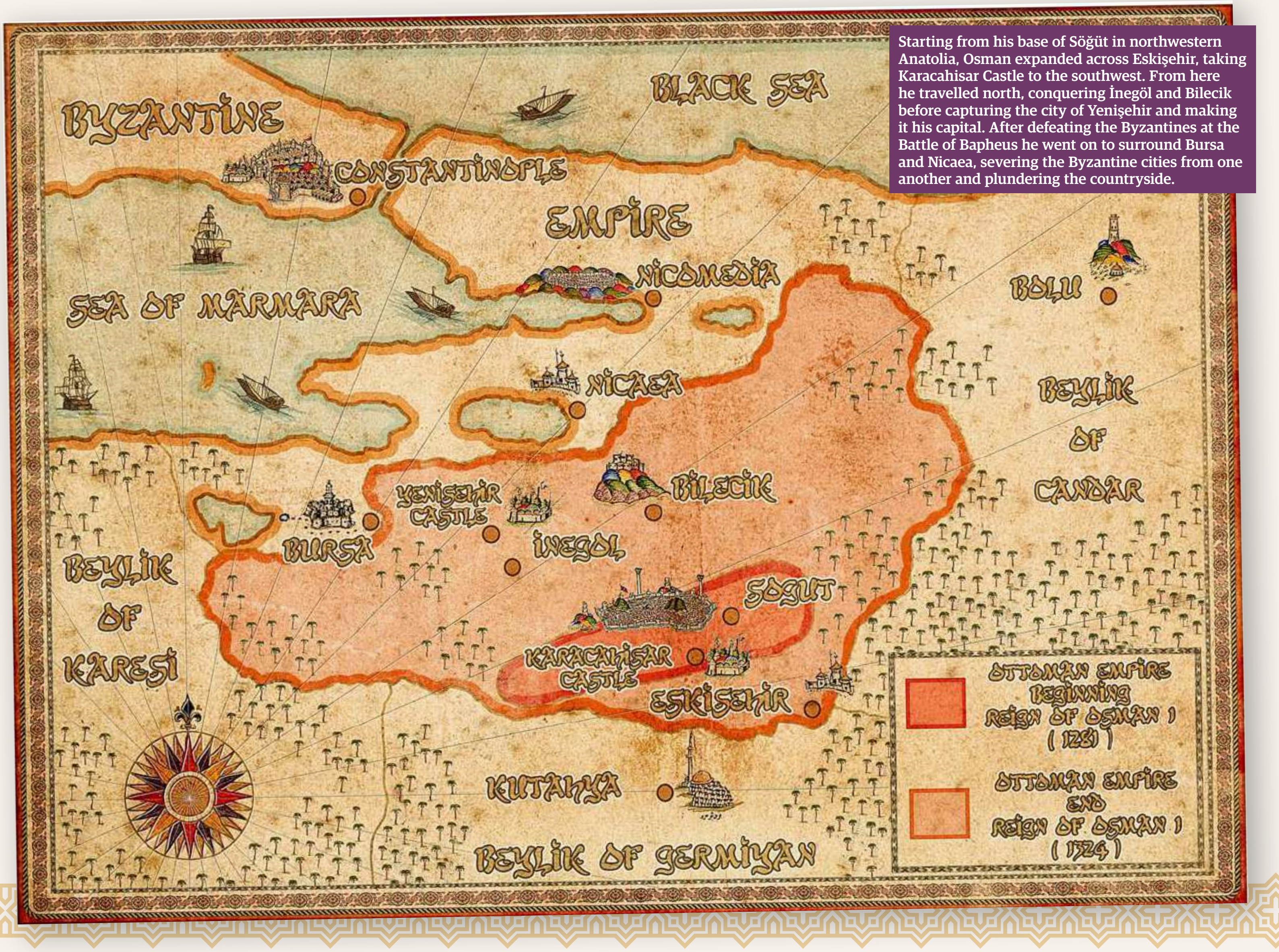
Osman's leadership appealed to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, attracting those who had tired of the old order

he killed his own uncle, crushed local opposition from the Germiyanids and battled a neighbouring Tatar tribe to secure his position. However, rather than building his realm upon the domains of his fellow Turks and Muslims to the south and east, he looked to the northwest to Constantinople. Though the Byzantines were a shadow of their former selves their capital remained an unparalleled symbol of prestige and might – the legacy of Rome was not lost on the Turks.

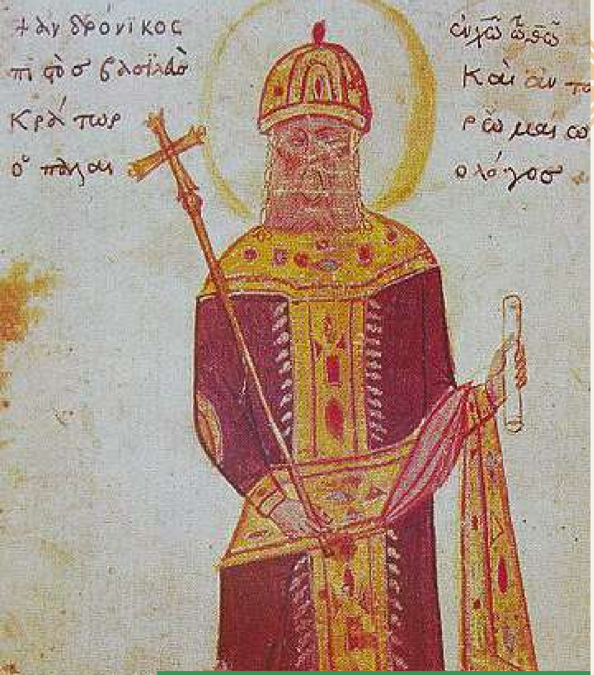
On a more practical level the city offered its rulers control over the Bosporus. Between Osman and Constantinople lay fertile lowlands, and beyond, all of Christendom – ripe for the taking. Like Anatolia, southeast Europe was in a state of fragmented chaos, divided and weak. Meanwhile the rural residents of Bithynia had long tired of paying extortionate taxes to their Byzantine lords, only to fall prey to Turkish raids. Softening the region for conquest, Osman made overtures to the people of Sakarya in the north, and found them extremely obliging.

These frontier lands had traditionally been protected by the Akritai, a group of Byzantine soldiers who enjoyed tax exemptions and the right to raid upland tribes. However, after recapturing Constantinople from the Latin Empire, emperor Michael Palaiologos stripped the Akritai of their land and wealth. In the subsequent revolt they were incorporated into the mainstream army, but the damage had already been done, and the east was left virtually defenceless. As Osman advanced upon their territory, many of these bitter soldiers were more than happy to jump ship and fight against their former masters.

Stretching from his heartland of Eskişehir, the 'Old City', Osman made his way north – subjugating local Byzantine vassals through diplomacy, or war. None could stand in the way of his fearsome army, fashioned in the Central Asian military tradition and centred around lightly armoured mounted archers who used trickery and strategy to frustrate and encircle their enemies. Emboldened, Osman decided


BLACK SEA
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
CONSTANTINOPLE
SEA OF MARMARA
NICOMEDIA
BOLU
NICAEA
BEYLIK OF CANDAR
BILECIK
YENISEHIR CASTLE
BURSA
INEGOL
BEYLIK OF KARESI
SOGUT
KARACAHISAR CASTLE
ESKISEHIR
KUTAHYA
BEYLIK OF GERMIYAN
OTTOMAN EMPIRE BEGINNING REIGN OF OSMAN I (1281)
OTTOMAN EMPIRE END REIGN OF OSMAN I (1324)

Starting from his base of Söğüt in northwestern Anatolia, Osman expanded across Eskişehir, taking Karacahisar Castle to the southwest. From here he travelled north, conquering İnegöl and Bilecik before capturing the city of Yenişehir and making it his capital. After defeating the Byzantines at the Battle of Bapheus he went on to surround Bursa and Nicaea, severing the Byzantine cities from one another and plundering the countryside.



With Osman running rampant across Bithynia, the desperate Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos turned to the Mongols for help

to cast off the Seljuk yoke his father had been so happy to serve, proclaiming independence and casting his lot with the dynasty of his own creation.

From Eskişehir he seized Karacahisar Castle, where sources say he granted homes to settlers from Germiyan and other provinces. Here the historian Aşıkpaşazade says Friday prayer was read in Osman's name for the first time, establishing his sovereignty. From Karacahisar he took the town of Yenişehir, or the 'New City', building more homes for his men and making it his capital – an event many mark as the start of the Ottoman dynasty. Though he failed to take Nicaea he entered the history books at the start of the 14th century with a stunning victory over the Byzantines at the battle of Bapheus on the shore of the Sea of Marmara. Here he demonstrated nomadic steppe warfare: studying the terrain, picking his battlefield and using his mounted archers to deadly effect.

To counter the threat the Byzantine general Mouzolon recruited Alan mercenary mounted archers trained in Tatar methods. He even attempted to use the element of surprise against the Turks, deploying ships to move his troops quickly, but Osman saw it coming. Leading an army of nomads and volunteers he turned the tables, hiding behind bushes and slopes and ambushing the Byzantines just as the Alan reinforcements shipped off – routing both forces before encircling and decimating the Alans.

Coins minted in Osman's name also reinforce the existence of his father, Ertuğrul, proclaiming the independent Ottoman state

The victory marked Osman as a leader of special stock, sending Turks and Christian sympathisers flocking to his cause, and chiefs humbling themselves before him. He advanced closer towards the coast, seizing crucial Byzantine towns, forts and villages and severing communications between Nicaea and Nicomedia. With his newfound recruits he raided the countryside and conquered all of Bithynia except for its major cities, which he instead cut off – strangling their economies.

In the aftermath the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos did the unthinkable, offering a royal princess in marriage to Osman's supposed overlord, the Ilkhanid khan based in northwest Iran. However, when the Mongols failed to deliver any support he turned to the Spanish crusading mercenary band, the Catalan Grand Company, who instead invited the Turks to join them in raiding the Balkans. It took an alliance with the kingdom of Serbia to stave the raiders off, but by this time most of the local peasants had been swayed to Osman's cause.

Despite its successes the Ottoman domain was still just one of many minor beys. However, Osman continued to push west of the Sakarya river, reaching the port of Mudanya. In doing so he isolated Constantinople from the powerful Byzantine city of Bursa, which Ibn Battuta would later describe as "a great and important city with fine bazaars and wide streets, surrounded on all sides by gardens and running springs". Though unable to seize the major cities of Bursa and Nicaea, the surrounding plains made Osman wealthy – if not in coin, in agriculture – reaping the fruits of settling and expanding without adopting urban mannerisms or culture.

A coin minted in 1324 bears Osman's likeness, identifying him as an independent leader. Though he would remain obsessed with capturing Bursa, its fall eluded him. He died in around 1323, four years into a siege of the city. In 1326 the city finally buckled, surrendering to Osman's son Orhan, who made it his new capital.

While Osman's origins are cloaked in mystery, his legacy is concrete. He cast aside his nomadic past to lay roots at the heart of the world, the flowers blooming just one generation later as Orhan issued independent coinage, set up an official administration, adopted sedentary methods of warfare, created a precursory standing army, entered the Balkans and established an architectural tradition, manifested through organised religion.

Due to a distinct lack of sources, later Ottomans were keen to mythologise their founding chief. One 15th-century story claimed a Seljuk sultan presented him with an insignia of office – a drum, a robe of honour and a horsetail standard – recognising him as the rightful heir to the Seljuks. An Ottoman chancellor even went to the trouble of forging documents to this effect in 1575. Another claim presented him as a descendent of the Byzantine Comneni dynasty, perhaps retroactively justifying the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.

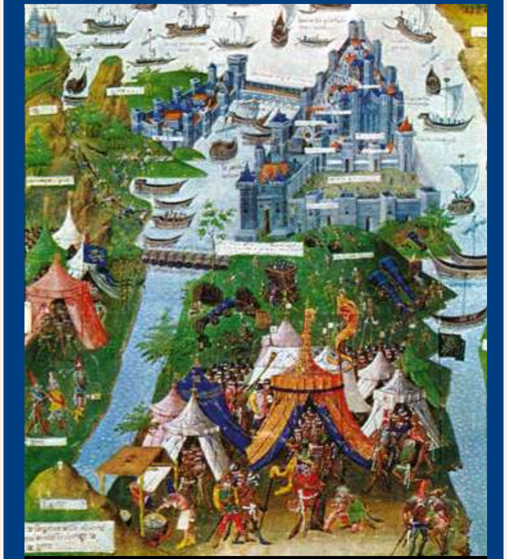
Desperate to lend more legitimacy to the Ottomans than their Timurid and Turkmen neighbours, Osman's lineage was traced back to the prophet Noah, and some said he descended from the Arabs of the Hejaz. In truth he was probably born a peasant. But that only made his accomplishments more remarkable, as he single-handedly lay the foundations of one of the world's greatest empires – a realm that would shake Christendom to its core.

> "OSMAN DECIDED TO CAST OFF THE SELJUK YOKE HIS FATHER HAD BEEN SO HAPPY TO SERVE, PROCLAIMING INDEPENDENCE…"

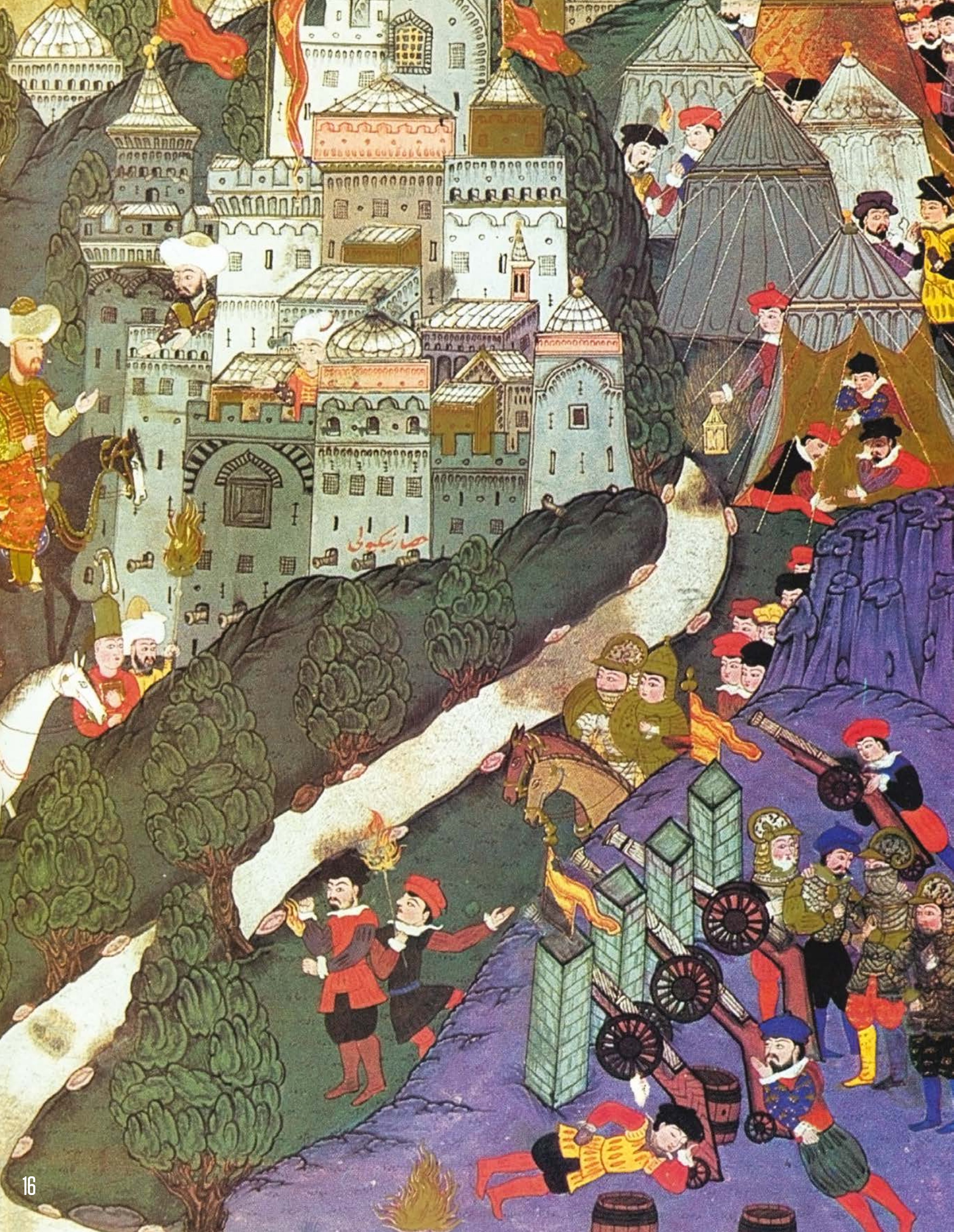
OSMAN'S DREAM

While sleeping in the house of the holy man, Sheikh Edebali, Osman envisioned a bright crescent moon rising from Edebali's breast and sinking into his own, before a tree sprouted from his navel to cover all the world. Beneath its vast shade people drank from streams which flowed at the feet of mountains, watering gardens and fountains. When Osman told Edebali about his dream the holy man allegedly replied: "Congratulations, for God has given the imperial office to you and your descendants, and my daughter Malhun shall be your wife."

This story would later be increasingly embellished to mythical heights, used to reinforce Ottoman legitimacy. Some even attributed it to his quasi-historical father; others claimed the tree turned towards Constantinople, which formed a precious stone on a ring, symbolising the Ottoman Empire, covering the entire planet. Osman, claims one narrative, then awoke wearing the ring. Early land deeds suggest that Edebali was a historical figure, whose daughter was indeed one of Osman's two wives.



Though legend claims Osman dreamed of a world protected beneath the shade of the Ottoman umbrella, some point to its heart in Istanbul


حصار زیکتوار

THE RISE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

From humble beginnings, the Ottomans went on to conquer lands in three continents, forging an empire that lasted for 600 years

Written by Will Lawrence

It was an empire founded on the promise of a dream, which visited the Turkish tribal chief Osman as he slept soundly one night, outside the home of a holy man. During his slumber, Osman saw a moon rise from the holy man's breast and sink slowly into his own. Then a tree sprouted from his own navel, spreading its branches and encompassing the entire world. The holy man interpreted this night-vision as God giving Osman imperial office. The dream became reality.

In truth, this vision was actually first communicated in the 15th century, 100 years after Osman's death, but nevertheless it stands as one of the empire's key founding myths and provided temporal and divine authority for the Ottomans' remarkable success.

For the Ottoman Empire was indeed an almighty achievement. Launched from the plains of the smallest Turkish emirate in western Anatolia, at the height of its power it encompassed a vast domain, stretching from Hungary to the Persian Gulf and from North Africa to the Caucasus, before beginning a slow decline through the 17th century to its final demise in the 1920s.

The Ottomans first made their mark at the turn of the 14th century, when they were just one among many Turkish tribal groups from central Asia vying for prominence in Anatolia, the swathe of land nestled between the Black Sea, the Aegean and the Mediterranean.

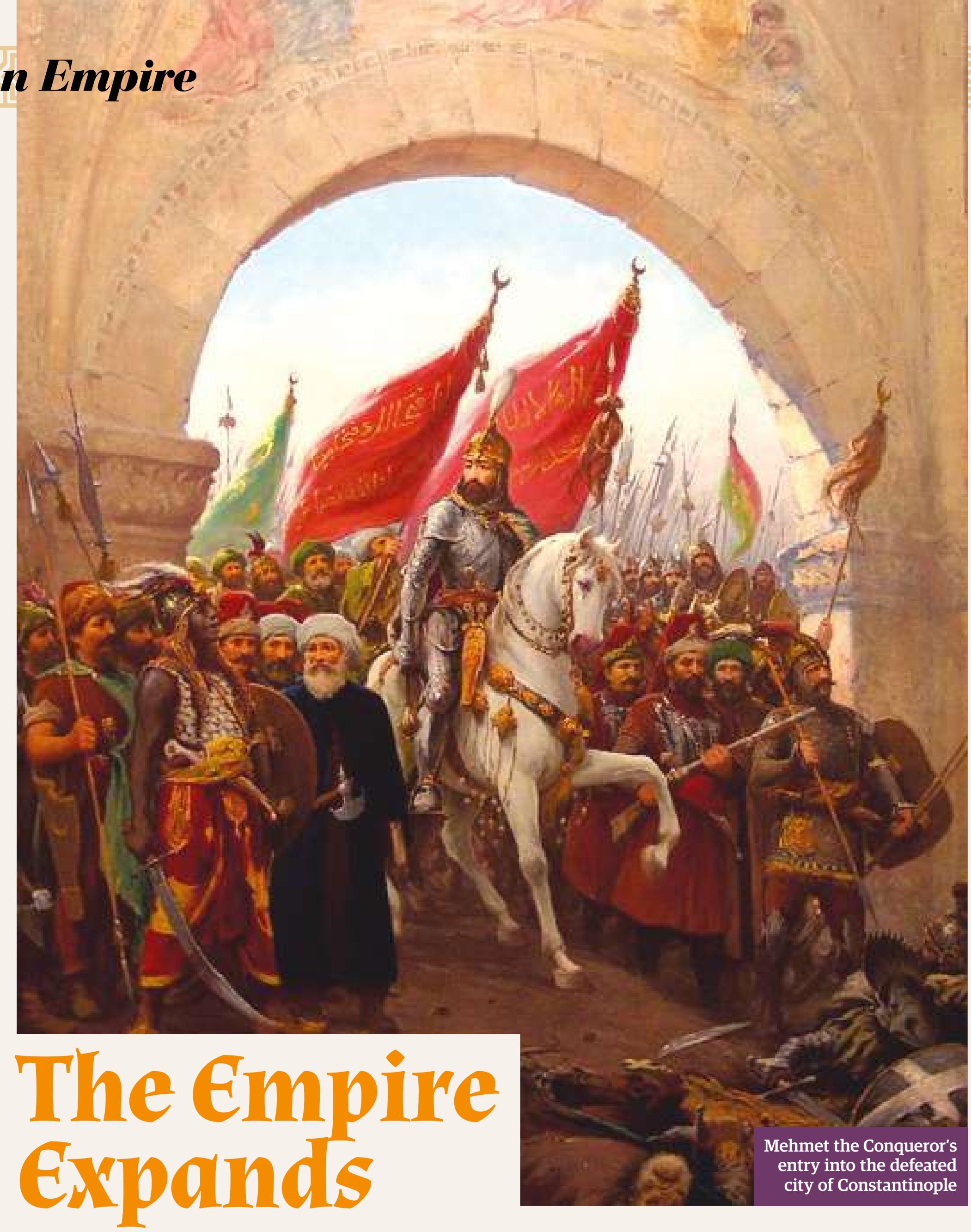
This land had once formed part of the Eastern Roman Empire and then, after the founding of Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire. Following the conquest of this great city by the Europeans of the Fourth Crusade during the previous century, however, the Byzantine Empire had diminished, and by 1300 its Asian holdings comprised only a few ports on the Anatolian coast.

The Ottomans' first step towards toppling the Byzantines and establishing a regional authority came under the leadership of Osman, and at the expense of their fellow Turkish tribes in Anatolia. The region flexed its autonomous muscles during the 1291 succession dispute among their Mongol overlords in Persia. But, as the other Turkish tribes gradually gave up the fight, Osman continued fighting and by 1299, his Ottomans were besieging the city of Nicaea. The Ottomans' great period of conquest was about to begin.

In 1302, the Byzantine emperor Andronicus II, who was alarmed at Osman's quickly growing influence and his perennial raiding of the Byzantine borderlands, mustered his army to put the Turkish tribesmen in their place. The Byzantine force met the Ottomans not far from Constantinople, on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara, where they were ambushed and routed from the field.

This was the Ottomans' first great victory over the Byzantines and luckily for him, it greatly enhanced Osman's reputation, as did his follow-up campaign, which severed communications between the cities of Brusa and Nicaea. Thousands of immigrant Turkish households rallied to his banner. As Osman's power grew, Andronicus sought alliances, though these ultimately came to nought, and Ottoman raiding continued until Osman's death around 1323/24. Leadership passed to Osman's son, Orhan, who went on to capture Brusa, establishing the very first Ottoman capital. This was in 1326, a date that is often cited as the birth of the empire itself.

> "It was an empire founded on the promise of a dream, which visited Turkish tribal chief Osman"



Mehmet the Conqueror's entry into the defeated city of Constantinople

The Empire Expands

Between the 14th and 16th centuries, the Ottoman Empire flowered, threatening the very heart of Europe

In the 1340s, civil war erupted within the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans were invited to step into imperial affairs, leading to the capture of Gallipoli in 1354, their first foothold in Europe. They extended their influence into the continent when, in 1361, Murad I captured the city of Adrianople, which was renamed Edirne before emerging as the new Ottoman capital in 1365.

The Ottomans' freshly acquired territories now encircled Constantinople and the emperor, John V, signed a treaty that saw his once mighty city become little more than an Ottoman vassal.

With a European base at Edirne, the Ottomans struck out against the Balkans. The Serbian Empire was also burgeoning during this period, but the decisive battle of Kosovo in 1389, though claiming the life of Murad I, saw the Ottomans emerge victorious once again. Murad's son Bayezid succeeded his father and earned the name 'the Thunderbolt', such was his military prowess.

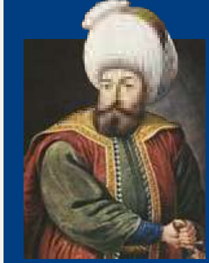
Claiming he would water his horse at the altar of St Peter's in Rome, he quelled rebellion within the empire before taking Bosnia and Bulgaria, and then finally coming face to face with Western Europe, winning his first engagement against European heavy cavalry at the battle of Nicopolis in 1396. The Ottomans did not escape without setbacks, and the rise of the fabled leader Tamerlane, the successor to the Mongols in the east, checked their power when defeating and capturing Bayezid at Anakara in 1402. It seemed as though the empire would disintegrate amid the power struggle that followed Bayezid's death.

Ottoman fortunes began to revive, however, picking up pace when Sultan Murad II led the first, albeit unsuccessful, siege of Constantinople in 1422. He launched a Hungarian offensive in 1439 that culminated in one of the greatest Ottoman victories at Varna in 1444, where the Hungarians and Western crusading forces, which included the mighty Teutonic Knights, were heavily defeated.

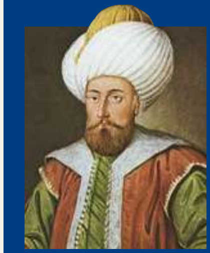
It was Murad's successor, Mehmet II, who was to cement Ottoman power in the European sphere. Known to history as Mehmet the Conqueror, he finally toppled Constantinople in 1453 and ravaged

THE EARLY OTTOMAN LEADERS

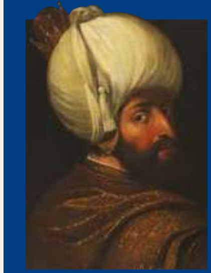
Meet the men who made the Ottoman Empire a force to be reckoned with



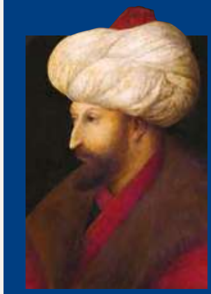
Osman I: The founder
Little is known about the background of this ruler of a small principality in north-western Anatolia. Both the name of the dynasty and the empire that the dynasty established are derived from his name's Arabic form, Uthmān. He died in 1323/24.



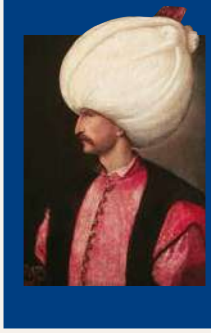
Murad I: The first sultan
Ruling from 1360 to 1389, Murad oversaw rapid Ottoman expansion in Anatolia and the Balkans. During his reign, new forms of government and administration emerged to consolidate Ottoman rule. The Janissaries and the child-levy flowered under his stewardship.



Bayezid I: 'The Thunderbolt'
The most ambitious of the Ottoman leaders, Bayezid ruled from 1389-1402 and founded the first centralised Ottoman state based on traditional Muslim institutions. He also stressed the need to extend Ottoman conquest in Anatolia as well as waging war against the infidels.

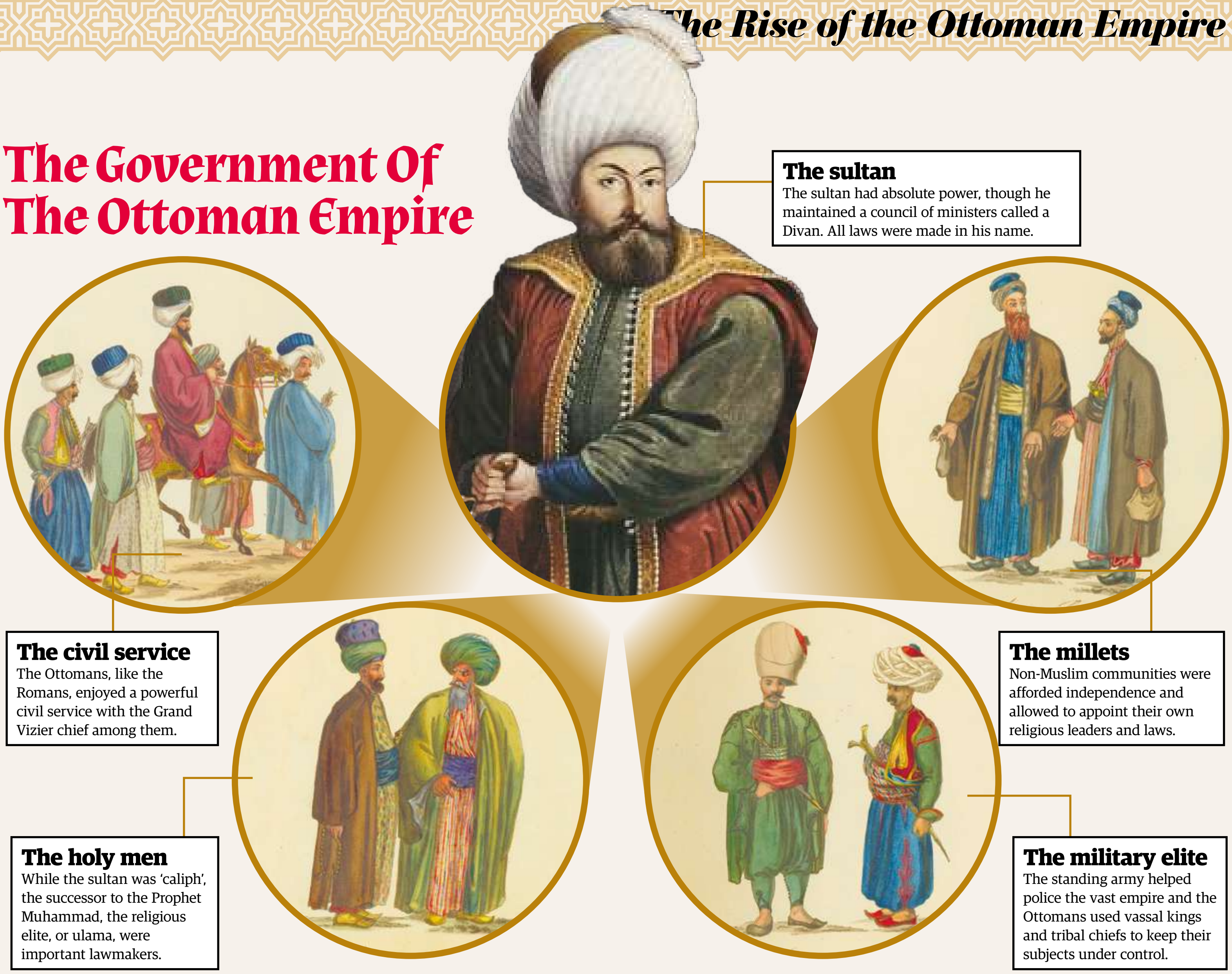


Mehmed II: 'The Conqueror'
Mehmed ruled from 1444-46 and then again from 1451-81. Despite his youth, he overruled his advisers and conquered Constantinople, bringing down the Byzantine Empire and establishing what would remain the Ottoman heartland for the next 400 years.



Suleiman I: 'The Magnificent'
Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1520 to 1566, Suleiman's bold military campaigns expanded the realm — he evicted the Hospitallers from Rhodes and won the great victory at Mohacs — while making great strides in the fields of law, literature, architecture and art.

The Government Of The Ottoman Empire



The sultan
The sultan had absolute power, though he maintained a council of ministers called a Divan. All laws were made in his name.

The civil service
The Ottomans, like the Romans, enjoyed a powerful civil service with the Grand Vizier chief among them.

The millets
Non-Muslim communities were afforded independence and allowed to appoint their own religious leaders and laws.

The holy men
While the sultan was 'caliph', the successor to the Prophet Muhammad, the religious elite, or ulama, were important lawmakers.

The military elite
The standing army helped police the vast empire and the Ottomans used vassal kings and tribal chiefs to keep their subjects under control.

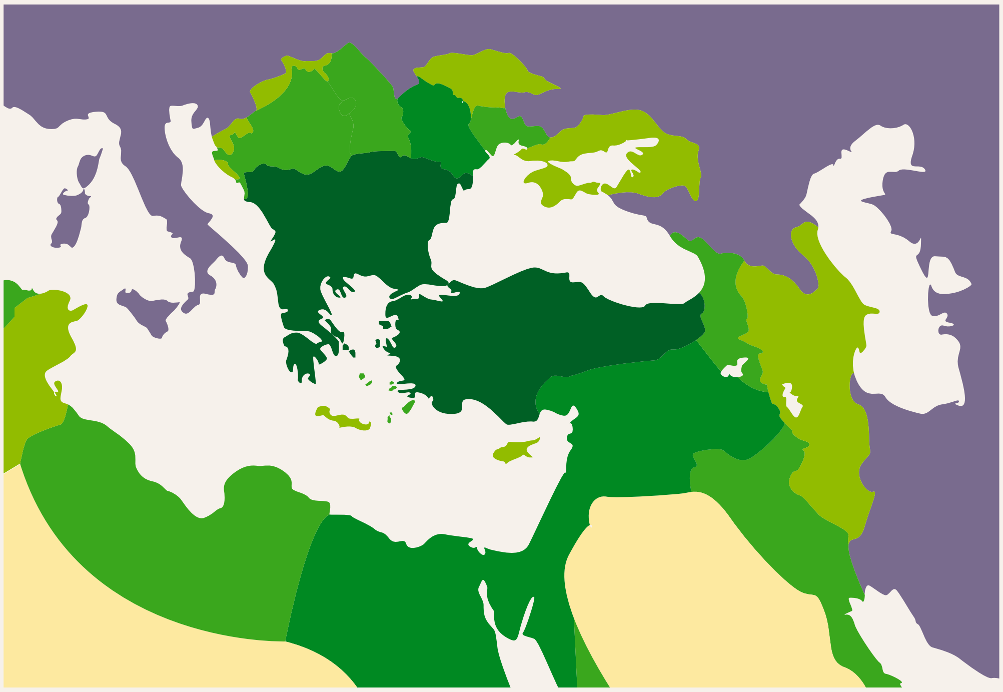
the Balkan states. In Greece, the Duchy of Athens surrendered in 1456 and the Ottomans soon conquered the Peloponnese.

The infamous Vlad Tepes (the Impaler) caused problems for the Ottomans in Wallachia and the Knights Hospitaller successfully defended Rhodes, though Mehmet remained unperturbed. He launched his most audacious campaign in 1480 with the invasion of Italy, causing panic in Western Europe. Italy was saved not by Europe's military might but by Mehmet's death in 1481.

In 1520, the man widely perceived as the Ottomans' greatest sultan, Suleiman 'the Magnificent', came to power, capturing Belgrade a year after his accession, taking the Hospitaller island of Rhodes the year after that and then winning his greatest victory in 1526 - when he brought about the collapse of Medieval Hungary.

From now on, the Ottomans would hammer away at the great empire of the Hapsburg dynasty as the rest of Europe trembled. They expanded into North Africa and fought many more famous battles – the Great Siege of Malta (1565), the capture of Cyprus, the great naval conflict at Lepanto (1571) and the slaughter at Kerestes (1596). The enemy was at the gates and war for the European heartland was not far behind.

Ottoman conquests 1481-1683



🟩 Ottoman Empire in 1481 🟩 Conquests of Selim I, 1512-20 🟩 Conquests of Suleiman, 1520-66 🟩 Conquests, 1566-1683 🟨 Desert

The Janissaries

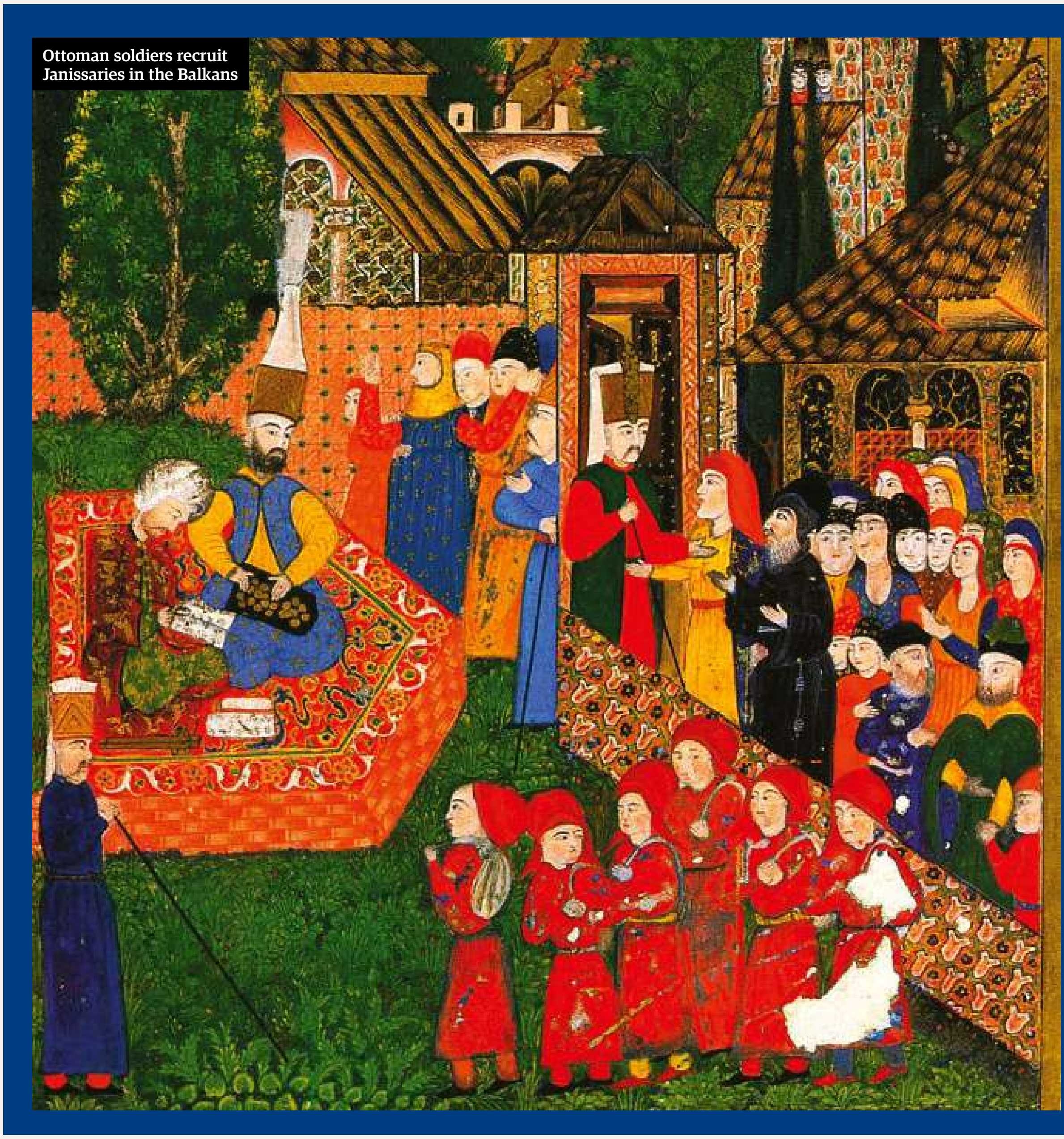
The Ottoman army was a fearsome machine, unlike anything else that Medieval Europe had ever seen, and their elite troops were the mighty Janissaries

In Medieval Europe, the Ottoman army was unique - the entire empire lived for war and one conquest fuelled the next. Even later in the empire's life, during the siege of Baghdad in 1683 when the Persians demanded the contest be settled by single combat, the sultan, Mehmet IV, stepped forward and cut down the Persian champion himself.

Unlike the European armies they so regularly routed, the Ottoman forces were full-time professionals. Chief among their myriad units were the Janissaries, the Ottoman elite infantry, who lived solely for war. Even marriage and family were forbidden to them.

Their only love was combat; the only person to who they owed loyalty was the sultan. They were his men, forming his personal bodyguard. They were recruited from Christian slave boys – to enslave fellow Muslims was contrary to religious law – though to describe the Janissaries as a slave-army fails to recognise the honour and prestige they enjoyed within the Ottoman Empire.

The boys surrendered little when they left their homes. Recruited mostly from the Balkan states, they left behind poverty in a rural life that offered little hope of professional advancement. Once converted to Islam, educated and trained, they became important players in an empire that admired martial ability and, as time developed, like the Praetorian Guard in ancient Rome they even became kingmakers, famously rebelling against Osman II in 1622 and restoring Mustapha to the Sultanate.



Ottoman soldiers recruit Janissaries in the Balkans

RECRUITMENT

Why did the sultan buy Christian children to build his forces?

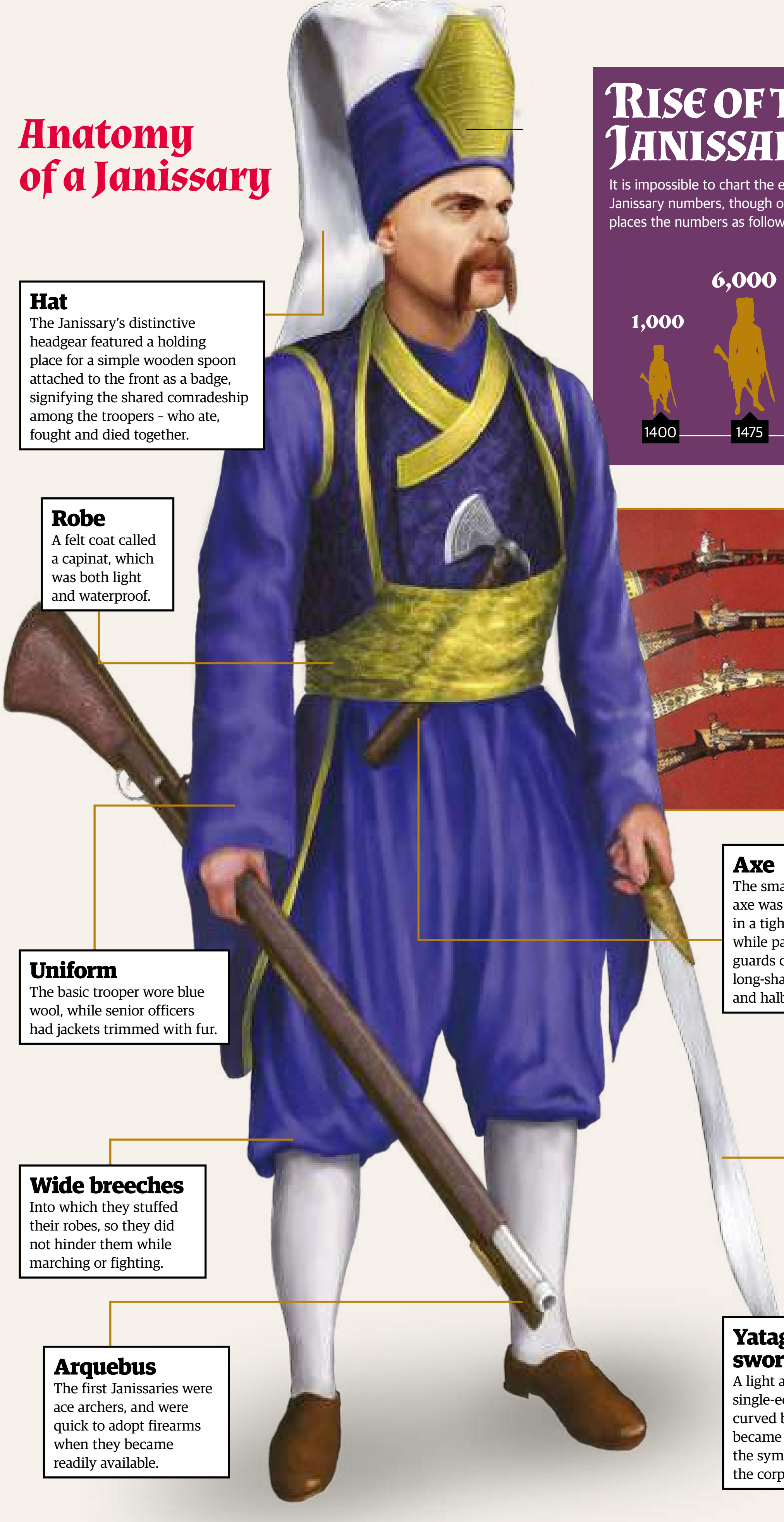
Murad I is widely regarded as the founder of the Janissary units following his recruitment of Christian prisoners of war into his army some time after 1377. It was a move that was enhanced by his successor, Bayezid, who introduced the 'gathering' during the 1380s, a levy on Christian boys, aged between eight and 18 years, from the Balkan states. "We light our lamp with oil taken from the hearts of the infidels," wrote the Sultan Mehmet II in the 1400s.

Ottoman officials would descend upon the Balkan villages every three to seven years and drafted the best-looking, strongest and most intelligent boys to be employed in service of the empire, either as soldiers (in the case of the Janissaries) or administrators or as palace servants.

In the earlier years of empire, the Ottomans were careful not to impoverish their subjects and so would absolve from the levy any boy who was the oldest or the only male child in his family, or any who was a widow's son, and they would never deplete a village of its entire stock. It was in the Ottoman interests to keep Balkan agriculture as buoyant as possible to fuel their empire and keep rebellions quiet. During the 1500s it is estimated that the yearly draft was about 1,000-3,000 boys.

Often families from poor mountain districts would volunteer their sons willingly, delighted to see them step onto the Ottoman career ladder. Though technically slaves, the Janissaries could maintain contact with their families and, as possessions of the sultan himself, could not be bought or sold.

Anatomy of a Janissary



Hat
The Janissary's distinctive headgear featured a holding place for a simple wooden spoon attached to the front as a badge, signifying the shared comradeship among the troopers – who ate, fought and died together.

Robe
A felt coat called a capinat, which was both light and waterproof.

Uniform
The basic trooper wore blue wool, while senior officers had jackets trimmed with fur.

Wide breeches
Into which they stuffed their robes, so they did not hinder them while marching or fighting.

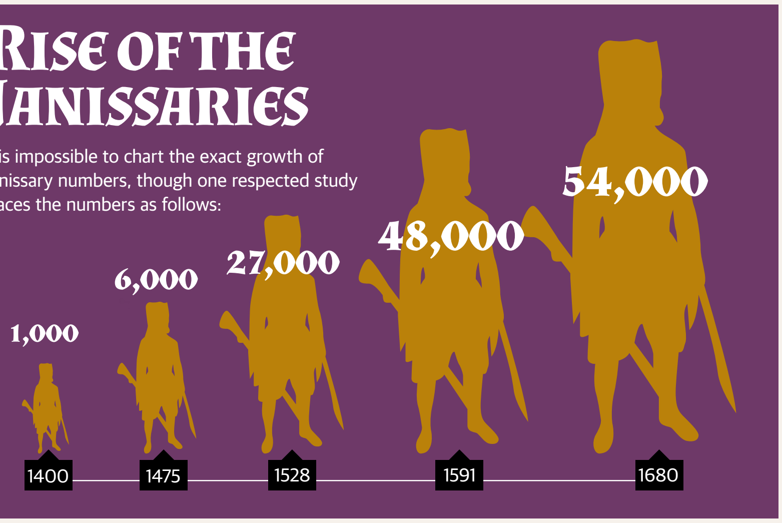
Arquebus
The first Janissaries were ace archers, and were quick to adopt firearms when they became readily available.

Axe
The small hand axe was useful in a tight melee, while palace guards carried long-shafted axes and halberds.

Yatagan sword
A light and single-edged curved blade that became one of the symbols of the corps.

RISE OF THE JANISSARIES

It is impossible to chart the exact growth of Janissary numbers, though one respected study places the numbers as follows:



Janissaries favoured the arquebus when firearms became readily available

TRAINING

Once marched all the way to the Ottoman capital, Constantinople – a test in itself – the boys were circumcised and converted to Islam. Most did this willingly and conversion back to Christianity was rare. They were then tested to discover their best potential, the brightest being selected for the palace schools and future jobs in the Ottoman palaces or civil service.

Those not selected for such lofty positions were marked for military duties and were hired out to Turkish villagers for up to seven years. After this service, they were then packed off to the training crops, with the majority trained for the regular infantry, learning weapon skills and strict discipline, as well as mathematics.

Some of the more promising were selected for education in the households of powerful families, where they were taught more technical skills such as gunnery and carriage driving.

The barrack life instilled a sense of loyalty among the recruits, who also acted as policemen and firemen when the main military bodies were away on campaign. They had the tradition of regimental life drummed into them during these formative years, swearing loyalty to their fellows upon a tray that contained salt, a Koran and a sword, though their ultimate fealty belonged to the sultan. Across the empire they were his eyes, his ears and his ultimate fighting machine.

The Fall of Constantinople

Masters of the surrounding landscape, the dramatic toppling of Constantinople proved a symbolic victory for the Ottomans

It was Mehmed the Conqueror who launched the final assault on Constantinople and brought the last vestige of a once-mighty empire into the Ottoman fold. Though the city had long proved little more than a vassal state, he coveted the glory its fall would bring. Succeeding to the Sultanate in 1451, he swiftly mobilised his armies and picked off remaining Byzantine possessions along the Black Sea coast. In 1452, he erected a castle on the European shore of the Bosphorus, opposite a Turkish castle on the Asiatic shore, taking strategic command of this vital waterway.

The Turks now controlled all shipping in and out of the Black Sea and Mehmed's artillery were quick to sink a Venetian ship that defied his order to halt. Mehmed beheaded the crew and impaled the captain, Antonio Rizzi. "As Rizzi's body mouldered in the rain," writes one historian, "the Byzantines made their last, desperate appeals to the West." With the great trading states of Genoa, Venice and Ragusa deeply involved in mercantile activity with the Ottomans, and at odds among themselves, they offered little in the way of support to the Byzantines. The Holy Roman Emperor issued a stern warning to Mehmed, but it fell on deaf ears. The sultan had a warning of his own: the Byzantines should leave the city by 5 March 1453, or suffer his frightening wrath.

It has been said that Mehmed rallied the whole of his empire for the assault on Christendom's most easterly outcrop. But even if figures of 300,000 men seem exaggerated, the forces assembled outside Constantinople's walls still certainly dwarfed those inside, who may have numbered as few as 12,000.

As the vast Turkish fleet sailed into the Sea of Marmara, a frightening weapon of war was uncovered before the city's outermost walls, a 28-foot cannon with the bronze of its barrel said to be eight inches thick. It had to be dragged into position by 700 men and 60 oxen.

Constantinople's stone defences were almost as formidable, comprising two sets of mighty walls dotted with towers. The emperor also ordered a mighty chain to be slung along the entrance to the Golden Horn, preventing any Turkish ships from launching an assault on the inner sea walls.

The Turks found the opening days difficult, their artillery proving less effective than they'd hoped against the city's lofty walls, while their siege towers were set ablaze and mining efforts repulsed. To add further insult, in April a small flotilla of supply ships successfully ran the Turkish blockade and safely entered the Golden Horn.

Mehmed upped his game and soon pulled off an extraordinary feat of engineering, building a wooden roadway from the Bosphorus to the Springs – over which he hauled 70 ships that took to the Golden Horn. He could now mount sea-borne assaults from much closer quarters.

On 29 May 1453, Mehmed launched his most intense assault, a simultaneous attack from land and sea, his Janissaries achieving the final victory as they pressed through a breached wall. It is presumed the brave Byzantine Emperor, Constantine, died while rallying his men.

With the city at the Ottomans' mercy, Mehmed allowed three days of looting and thousands of civilians were dragged off into slavery before the sultan took ownership of this renowned city and began its reconstruction as a Muslim metropolis.

WHY WAS THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE SO SUCCESSFUL?

A STANDING ARMY

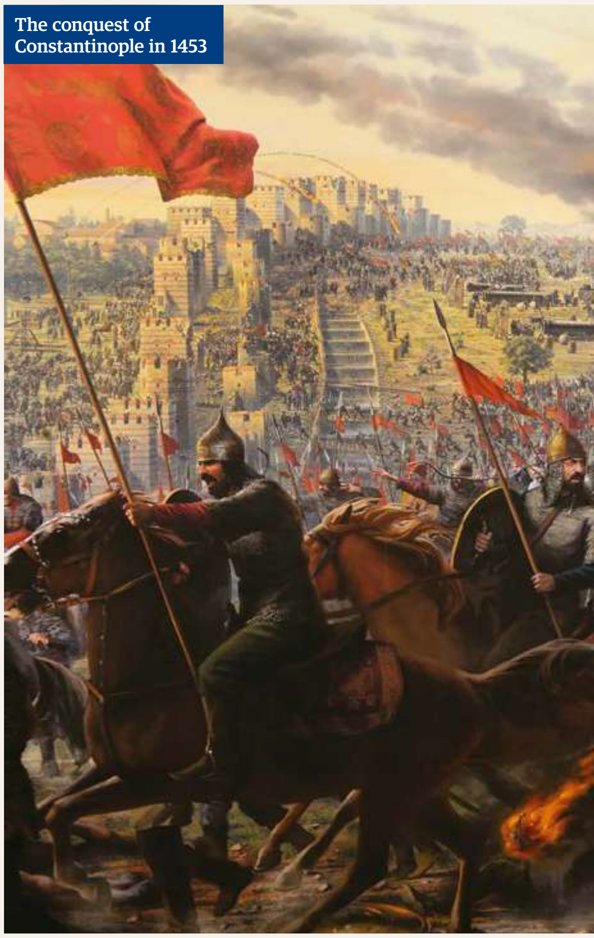
1 The Ottomans were the first since the Roman Empire to maintain a professional army with a brilliant logistical supply chain. While European rulers had to coax their squabbling lords into combat, the Ottomans could call into action a well-oiled war machine.

EXCELLENT MORALE

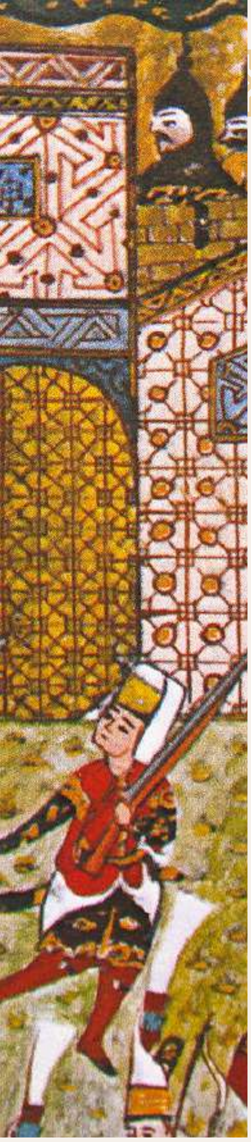
2 The Ottoman army contained the Janissaries, who lived for war, while their other troops were often motivated by a religious fervour that demanded they wage war against the infidel. Their leaders successfully analysed strategy and tactics and kept morale high.

FLEXIBLE GOVERNANCE

3 While heavy-handed in conquest, the Ottomans were light-handed in governance, tolerating different religious dominations where conversion proved too difficult. They also maintained local laws and customs so that their subjects would better fuel the Ottoman war machine.



The conquest of Constantinople in 1453



Bombardment begins 6 April

1 The Ottomans dig in along the Theodosian land wall and employ heavy artillery to batter the Byzantine defences, while the sappers bid to mine beneath the great towers. The Ottomans also use siege towers that loom higher than the city walls in an effort to destroy the defences.

A flotilla arrives 20 April

2 Three papal galleys and a Byzantine transport laden with corn from Sicily and other essential supplies take advantage of good winds to run across the Sea of Marmara. Turkish vessels bid to engage. A lethal game of cat and mouse ensues until finally the Christians reach the Golden Horn and are able to restock Constantinople.

Ships sail overland 22 April

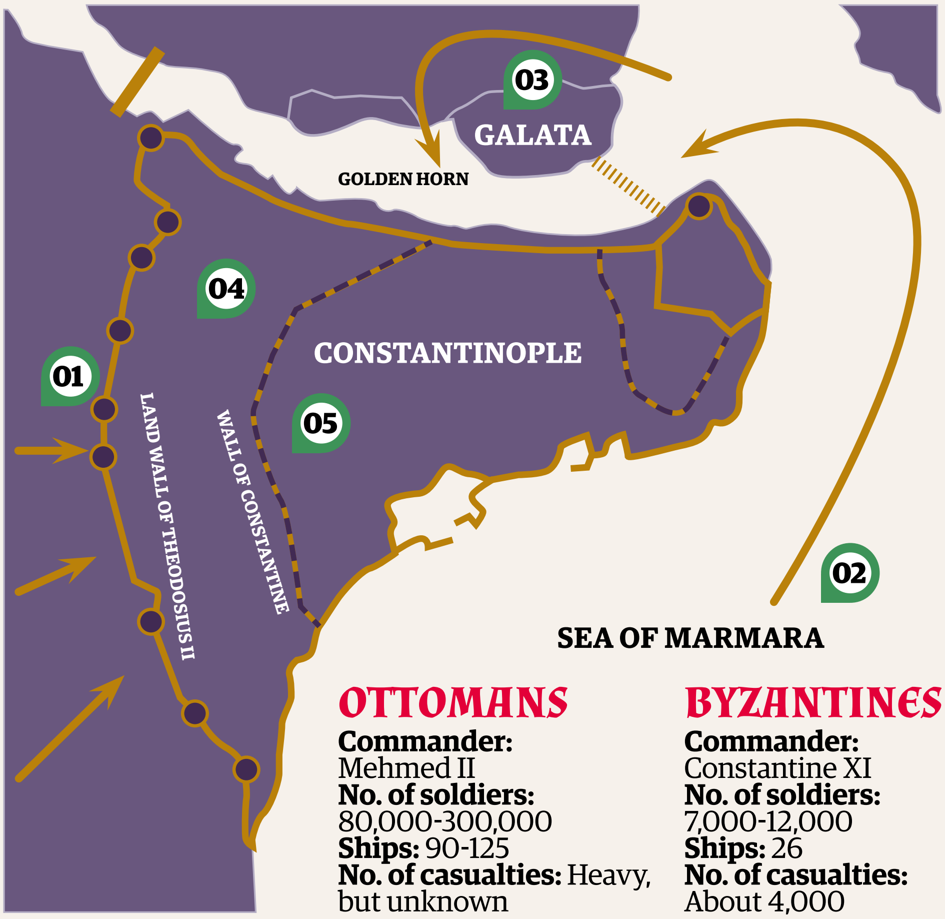
3 Mehmed transports more than 70 vessels overland and into a river feeding the Golden Horn north. A surprise attack against this newly ensconced fleet goes awry and costs the Christians many lives, which they can ill afford to lose.

Final battle 28 May

4 The weakened walls in the north west suffer the brunt of an initial attack though Mehmet's levies, and Anatolian infantry are beaten back by frenzied Christian defence. A final attack by the elite Janissaries finally turns the tide.

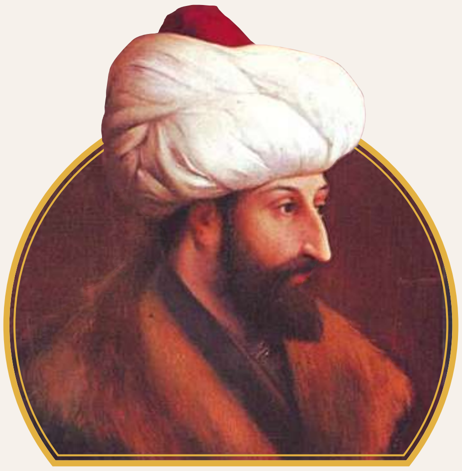
The city falls 29 May

5 The Ottomans break through, with the Circus Gate breached, and the emperor is forced to fall back to the inner walls. Many commentators claim that he is killed in battle while leading the final doomed counter attack.



OTTOMANS	BYZANTINES
Commander: Mehmed II	**Commander:** Constantine XI
No. of soldiers: 80,000-300,000	**No. of soldiers:** 7,000-12,000
Ships: 90-125	**Ships:** 26
No. of casualties: Heavy, but unknown	**No. of casualties:** About 4,000

© Thinkstock, Alamy



MEHMED
THE CONQUEROR

Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II forged a superpower in the 15th century by ruthlessly campaigning against an array of powerful enemies

Written by William Welsh

"Advance my friends and children!" Sultan Mehmed II shouted to the Ottoman troops preparing to attack the landward walls of Constantinople in the early morning hours of 29 May 1453. "Now is the moment to prove yourself worthy men!"

With parade ground precision, the provincial troops streamed forwards towards their target, shouting "Allah!" as they went. When they tried to scale a makeshift barricade plugging a breach in the walls made by the sultan's siege guns, they recoiled from the barrage of rocks, as buckets of burning hot pitch and molten streams of Greek fire were hurled at them by the Byzantine defenders.

Mehmed rode forward to check the progress of the assault. He screamed, shouted and swore in an effort to will his army into the city. He waved forward fresh units to maintain heavy pressure on the Christian defenders. After a superhuman effort, the Anatolians withdrew, having failed to overwhelm the enemy.

Mehmed had one last chance for victory on 29 May 1453, in what he had decided several days earlier would be his final attack on the city after a 53-day siege. If he combined his elite palace regiments with his janissary brigade, he would have enough men for another assault. Demonstrating the quick thinking that was the mark of a great commander, Mehmed personally led them to their jump-off point. They were eager for battle and welcomed an opportunity to prove themselves in front of their sultan.

As they fought at the stockade, Mehmed rode back and forth behind them yelling encouragement. Despite the auspicious start to their attack, it faltered like the one before it. Then a pair of fortunate incidents gave the Ottomans the advantage they needed to overwhelm the exhausted defenders.

Although Mehmed had two half-brothers ahead of him in line for the succession to the imperial throne, both of them died prematurely. From an early age Mehmed had an extremely volatile personality, which frequently manifested itself throughout his rule in bouts of rage.

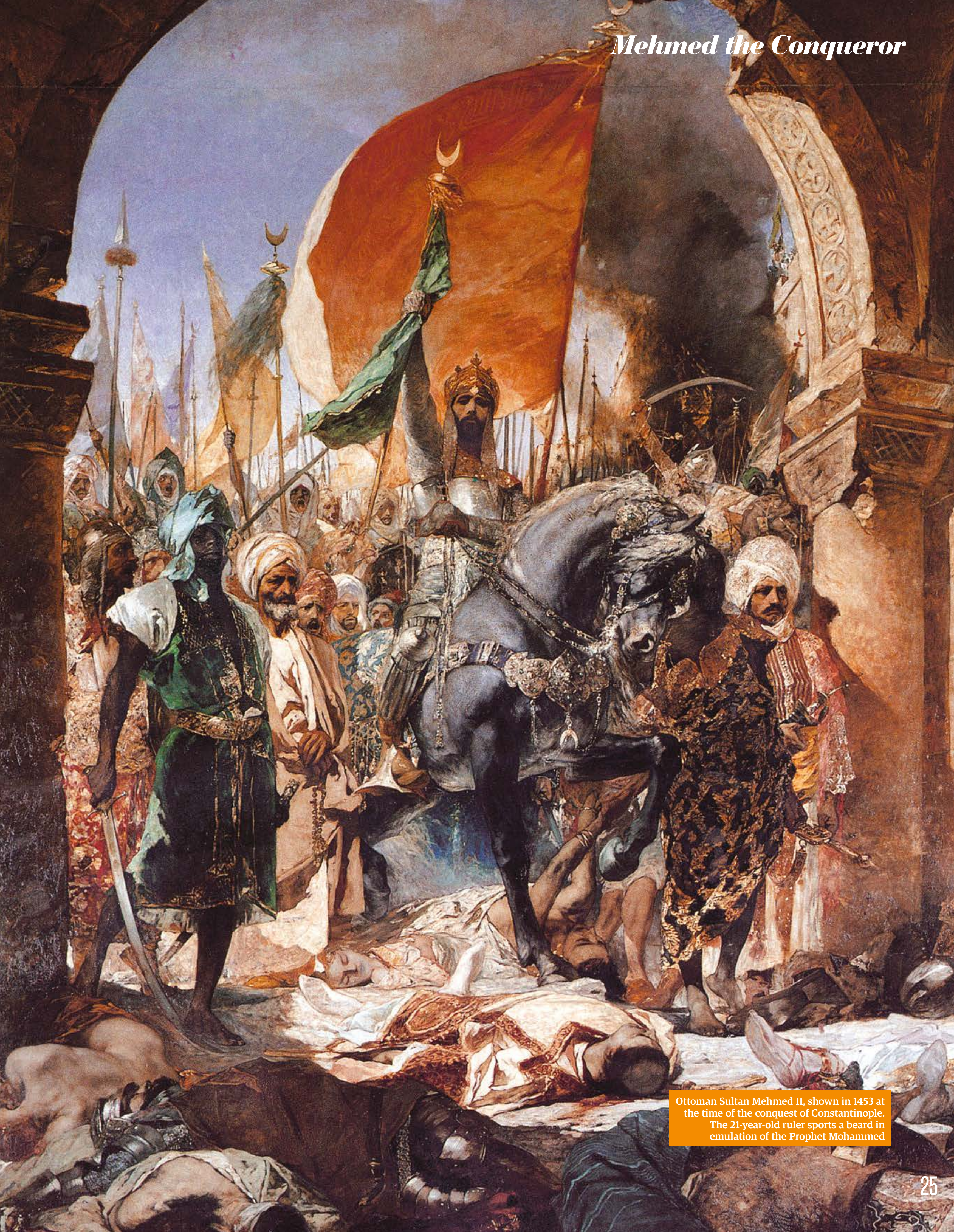
After two false starts in the 1440s, in which his father Murad II abdicated in favour of Mehmed only to be recalled by the grand vizier when his son proved too inexperienced to establish stability, Mehmed at last became sultan on 3 February 1451, upon his father's death. Mehmed quickly ratified existing treaties and truces with the Byzantines, Hungarians, Serbians and Venetians. The Christians saw him as a bumbling, weak sultan because of his earlier false starts, but Mehmed was consciously deceiving them.

Mehmed's pledge of peaceful intentions to Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Palaeologus had been entirely false. Constantinople had long been a thorn in the side of the Ottomans. The Byzantine Empire's existence interrupted the routine movement of the Porte's military forces back and forth between Anatolia and Rumelia. Moreover, it also sparked Christian crusades – in 1396, 1444 and 1448 – designed to 'liberate' Constantinople from the clutches of the surrounding Ottoman sultanate. The strength of the sultanate was evident in its having defeated the crusaders each time.

To remedy the situation, Mehmed decided he would not only begin a rapid ship-building program in the northern Aegean, but also construct a fortress on the European side opposite Anadolu Hisar. Mehmed named the fortress, which he intended to serve as a forward base for siege operations against Constantinople, Bogazkesen Hisar, meaning 'strait cutter' fortress, as it was intended in part to ensure the Ottomans controlled maritime trade in the Black Sea region. The site where the Ottomans would build the castle was Byzantine territory, and therefore the project would show that Mehmed had no qualms about violating Byzantine sovereignty.

Construction began in April 1452 and was completed in the record time of four months. When Emperor Constantine XI sent emissaries to Mehmed in June 1452 bearing gifts and imploring him to desist, he had them beheaded. It was tantamount to a declaration of war.

While he was overseeing the construction of Bogazkesen, also known as Rumeli Hisar, a Hungarian engineer named Urban approached Mehmed with the offer to custom build large bombards capable of knocking down thick walls.



Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, shown in 1453 at the time of the conquest of Constantinople. The 21-year-old ruler sports a beard in emulation of the Prophet Mohammed

Urban had approached Constantine XI first, but the Byzantine emperor could not afford the high cost of the weapons. Mehmed took Urban up on the offer.

Mehmed decided to test the first bombard that Urban furnished at Rumeli Hisar. The garrison mounted the bronze cannon, which could fire 272-kilogram (600-pound) stone balls, in the tower nearest the water. At that location, the Bosporus is only 640 metres (700 yards) wide, a distance that was in range of the large bombard. Mehmed issued orders that all vessels were to heave to for inspection by the Ottoman navy. This was done to ensure that grain and other supplies were not delivered by the Latin colonies on the shores of the Black Sea to Constantinople for the upcoming siege.

On 25 November 1452 three Venetian merchant ships tried to run the gauntlet. Two succeeded, but one bearing grain for Constantinople was sunk by a direct hit. In what may have looked like an act of mercy, the Ottomans fished the sailors and captain out of the water. But then, Mehmed ordered the sailors beheaded and the captain impaled as a warning to other vessels.

By expanding the Ottoman navy and procuring powerful new siege cannons that had only become available in Europe in the 15th century, Mehmed had the tools and equipment he needed to besiege Constantinople with confidence. Constantine, who was not able to get large-scale reinforcements from the Papacy or the Republic of Venice, had to make do with his garrison and a small number of reinforcements from Genoa. For the battle that was brewing, the Ottoman army could field 80,000 men against the Byzantines' 6,000 Greek and 3,000 foreign troops. The Ottoman navy that arrived off Constantinople totalled 125 ships, which was five times the number of ships the Byzantines had in their harbour, known as the Golden Horn. A massive chain that floated on wooden blocks barred the entrance to the harbour.

Urban's great bronze bombard used at Rumeli Hisar had greatly impressed Mehmed, and he ordered even larger guns to batter the thick walls of Constantinople. Mehmed ordered a foundry built at Edirne (Adrianople) for the manufacture of the bombards and smaller guns. Urban's mightiest bombard was eight metres (27-feet) long and fired a stone ball weighing 608 kilograms (1,340 pounds). The gun was transported to the vicinity of Constantinople in March 1453. Although the Greeks in Constantinople had artillery, their towers were too fragile to accommodate the vibration that occurred when they were fired.

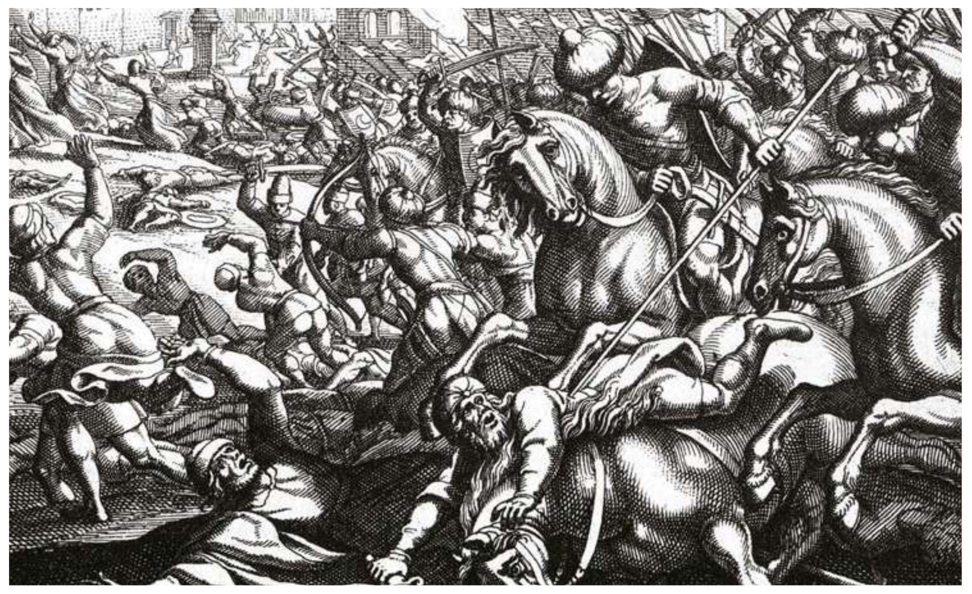
Mehmed joined his army before the walls of Constantinople on 5 April. He sent an emissary requesting immediate, voluntary surrender as required by Islamic law in return for a guarantee of the safety of the inhabitants, but Constantine declined the offer. Although the Byzantine emperor knew that he was heavily outnumbered and likely to suffer a terrible defeat, he chose to fight for the honour of his people.

Constantine had to stretch his army thin to man the 23 kilometres (14 miles) of walls and the 96 towers. The city was defended by an outer curtain and a higher inner wall. A wide ditch in front of the outer landward wall was designed to slow the assault. The Byzantine emperor hired Genoese engineer Giovanni Giustiniani to improve the city's defences. Giustiniani, who arrived with 700 Genoese troops, put men to work repairing and strengthening the walls.

Mehmed was a well-rounded commander who could not only lead troops in battle, but he also had an aptitude for planning and logistics. Moreover, he was keen on employing the latest scientific methodologies in siege warfare, such as bronze bombards.

On 6 April 1453 the Ottoman army arrived outside Constantinople. The sultan bivouacked opposite the centre of the landward walls between the Romanus and Charisius gates. The Ottoman artillerymen fired the great bronze bombard for the first time five days later, and it brought down a large section of wall near the Charisius Gate. To the astonishment of the besiegers, the Greeks repaired the wall during the night. In April initial attempts to storm the defences failed, but the bombardment of the walls continued unabated.

The Christians benefitted from not having to defend the two kilometres (three miles) of walls overlooking the harbour known as Golden Horn, but this soon changed. In early April Mehmed set his engineers to work constructing a roadway that would run from the Sea of Marmara, over the 60-metre (200-feet) high hill behind the suburb of Galata on the opposite bank of the Golden Horn from the great city, and down to a place known as the Valley of the Springs. From there the ships could be rowed into the harbour, thus bypassing the great chain blocking the main entrance to the Golden Horn.



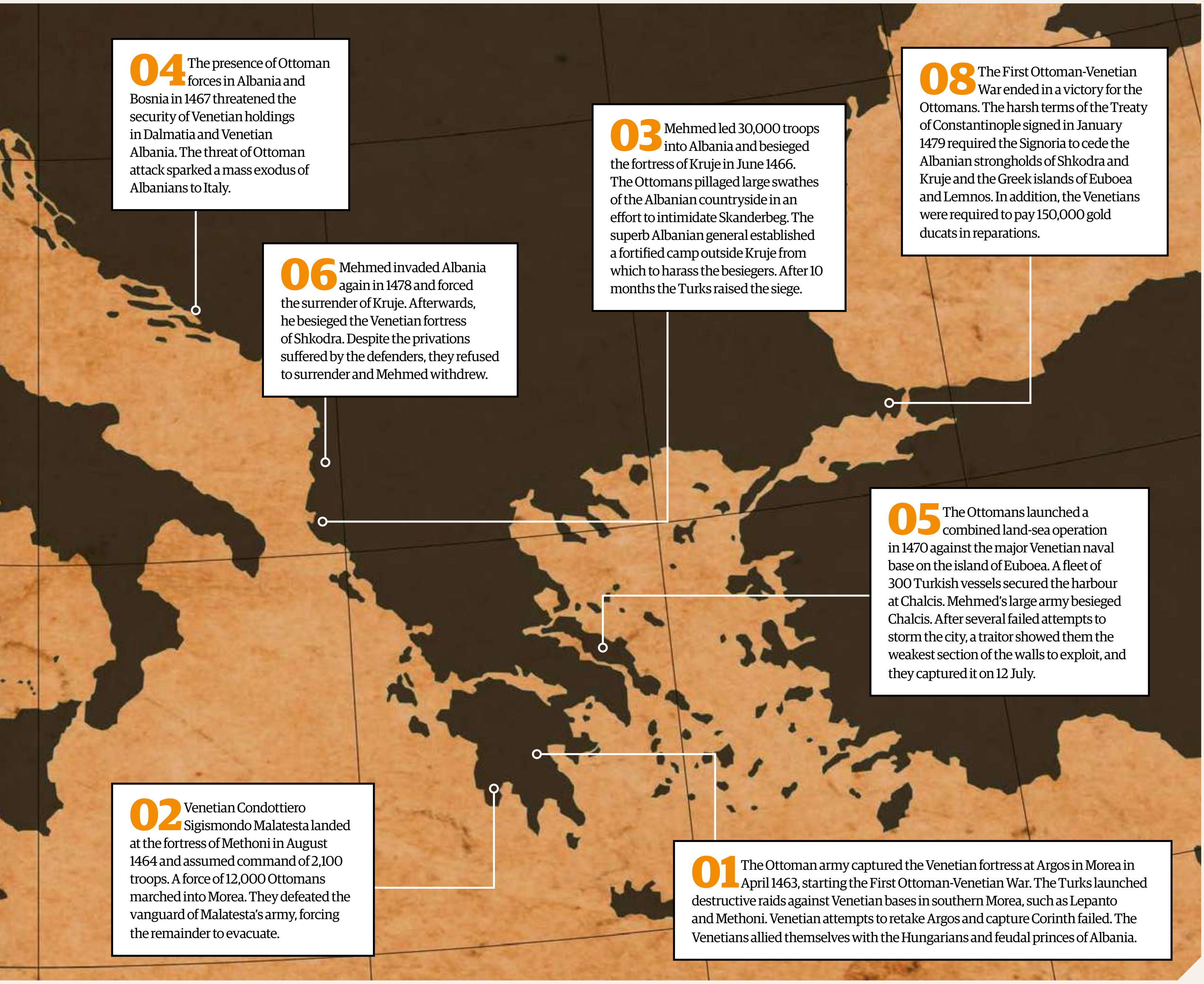
The final assault by the Ottomans against Constantinople overwhelmed the Byzantine defences and resulted in a bloodbath

WAR BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

The Porte faced a Venetian-led alliance during the 16-year conflict to control the Balkan lands

07 Thousands of Ottoman horsemen, known to the Venetians as saccomanni (sackers), raided deep into the Venetian Republic in summer 1478, pillaging and burning villages, farms and crops. Venetian troops remained in their forts, afraid to meet them in battle. The saccomanni penetrated as far as the Tagliamento valley.

> "MEHMED WAS KEEN ON EMPLOYING THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGIES IN SIEGE WARFARE, SUCH AS BRONZE BOMBARDS"



01 The Ottoman army captured the Venetian fortress at Argos in Morea in April 1463, starting the First Ottoman-Venetian War. The Turks launched destructive raids against Venetian bases in southern Morea, such as Lepanto and Methoni. Venetian attempts to retake Argos and capture Corinth failed. The Venetians allied themselves with the Hungarians and feudal princes of Albania.

02 Venetian Condottiero Sigismondo Malatesta landed at the fortress of Methoni in August 1464 and assumed command of 2,100 troops. A force of 12,000 Ottomans marched into Morea. They defeated the vanguard of Malatesta's army, forcing the remainder to evacuate.

03 Mehmed led 30,000 troops into Albania and besieged the fortress of Kruje in June 1466. The Ottomans pillaged large swathes of the Albanian countryside in an effort to intimidate Skanderbeg. The superb Albanian general established a fortified camp outside Kruje from which to harass the besiegers. After 10 months the Turks raised the siege.

04 The presence of Ottoman forces in Albania and Bosnia in 1467 threatened the security of Venetian holdings in Dalmatia and Venetian Albania. The threat of Ottoman attack sparked a mass exodus of Albanians to Italy.

05 The Ottomans launched a combined land-sea operation in 1470 against the major Venetian naval base on the island of Euboea. A fleet of 300 Turkish vessels secured the harbour at Chalcis. Mehmed's large army besieged Chalcis. After several failed attempts to storm the city, a traitor showed them the weakest section of the walls to exploit, and they captured it on 12 July.

06 Mehmed invaded Albania again in 1478 and forced the surrender of Kruje. Afterwards, he besieged the Venetian fortress of Shkodra. Despite the privations suffered by the defenders, they refused to surrender and Mehmed withdrew.

08 The First Ottoman-Venetian War ended in a victory for the Ottomans. The harsh terms of the Treaty of Constantinople signed in January 1479 required the Signoria to cede the Albanian strongholds of Shkodra and Kruje and the Greek islands of Euboea and Lemnos. In addition, the Venetians were required to pay 150,000 gold ducats in reparations.

On 22 April teams of oxen and hundreds of men dragged 80 small and medium-sized ships on a track of greased logs over the hill and down to the waterway on the other side. It was a herculean task, but the Ottomans had skilled engineers and plenty of manpower. Mehmed then ordered a pontoon bridge constructed across the Golden Horn for a secondary attack on the walls overlooking the harbour.

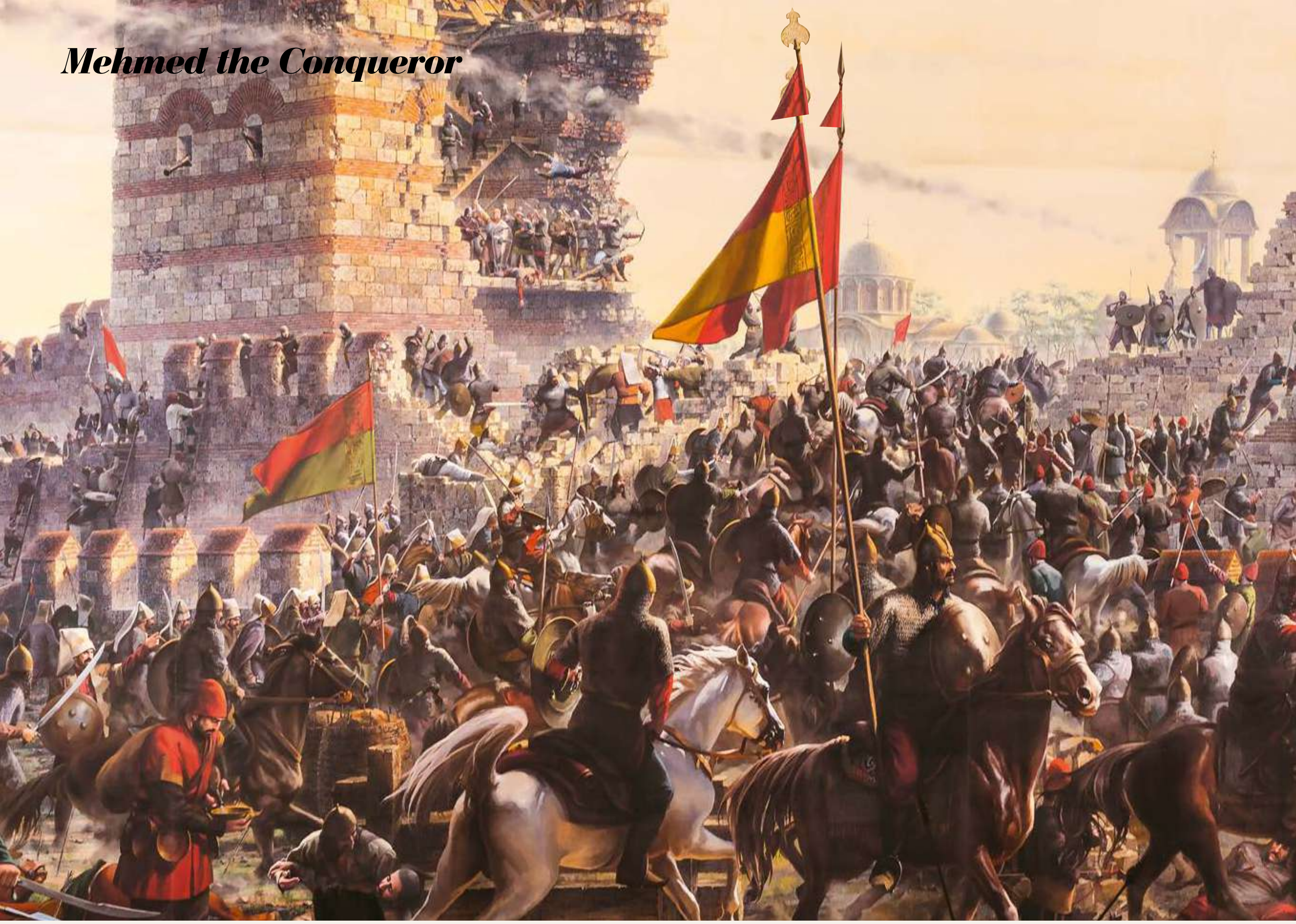
When rumours reached Mehmed in mid-May that a Hungarian army was marching to the relief of Constantinople, the sultan set 29 May for the final grand assault against Constantinople. Mehmed directed that assaults should be made against both the land and sea walls to stretch the defences to breaking point. On the morning of the attack, Emperor Constantine and Giustiniani assembled their best 2,000 fighters between the inner and outer walls in the centre of the land walls to fend off the Ottoman army's main attack.

> "THE OTTOMAN NAVY THAT ARRIVED OFF CONSTANTINOPLE TOTALLED 125 SHIPS, WHICH WAS FIVE TIMES THE NUMBER OF SHIPS THE BYZANTINES HAD IN THEIR HARBOUR"

Although the valiant Christians repulsed multiple assault waves, a small group of Ottoman soldiers found a secret entrance that was left unguarded near the Blachernae Palace. This constituted the first fortunate incident that led to the Ottoman victory.

50 Ottoman soldiers rushed up a set of stairs and captured a section of the wall. They then seized a tower and opened a gate for other Ottoman soldiers to enter the city. The Ottoman soldiers tore down the Venetian and Byzantine standards on the section of the rampart they had captured, and raised the Ottoman standard in their place.

About the same time, Giustiniani received a severe wound and quit the fight. This was the second incident that enabled the Ottomans to prevail. Seeing his departure, the defenders'



morale sank. Constantine apparently died in the fighting, but his body was never found.

Although Mehmed had promised his soldiers three days of looting, the sultan only granted them one day of pillage. Mehmed entered the city in the late afternoon at the head of a victory procession that included his ministers, imams and janissaries. Following the city's conquest, Mehmed renamed it Istanbul.

The fall of Constantinople sent waves of panic through Latin Christendom, putting the Papacy, the Genoese and Venetians on edge in the years that followed, as the Porte began chipping away at their colonies in the Aegean and Black seas.

Mehmed led 19 campaigns during his life, two-thirds of which were conducted in Eastern Europe. He was in the field constantly, moving back and forth between the Porte's western and eastern fronts. Ever since he was a boy Mehmed had dreamed of conquest and was determined to conquer Rome. Although this would prove out of reach, he nevertheless led Ottoman armies against an array of Christian foes in the Balkans. He annexed for the burgeoning Ottoman sultanate key regions that previously paid tribute, such as Albania, Serbia and Wallachia.

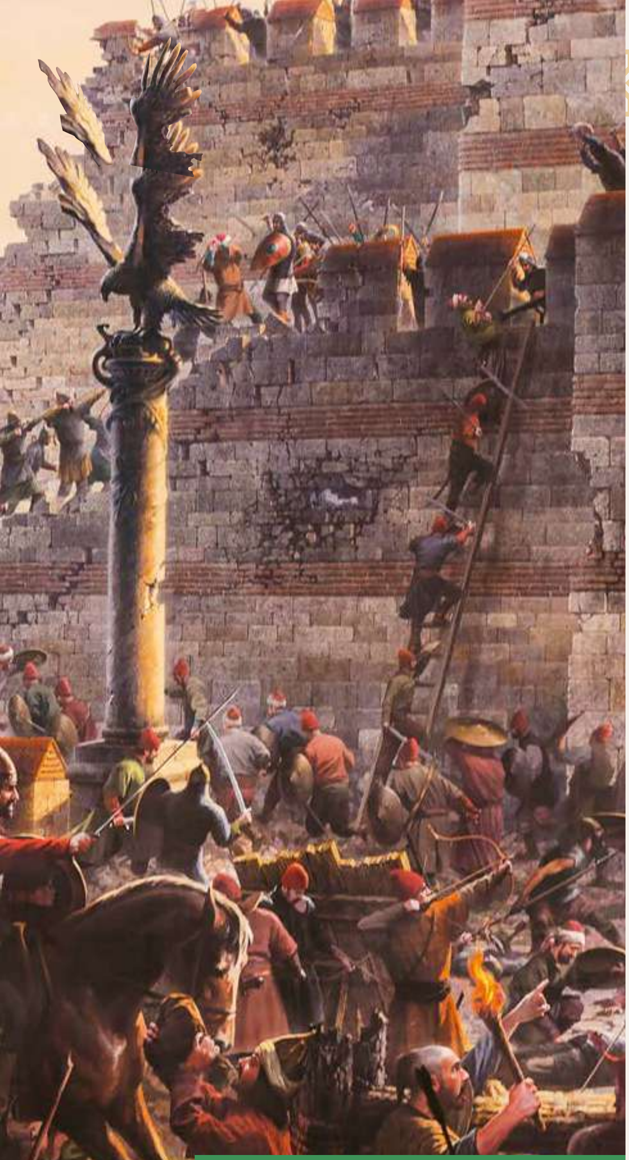
> "Ever since he was a boy Mehmed had dreamed of conquest and was determined to conquer Rome"

In 1456 Mehmed besieged Belgrade in Serbia. Janos Hunyadi, the principal commander for the Hungarians, moved to relieve the siege. Belgrade was a strong fortress, and Mehmed underestimated the difficulty he would have trying to conquer it. Hunyadi conducted a successful counterattack on 21 July 1456 against the besieging Ottoman army. The Hungarians surrounded and cut to pieces Mehmed's janissaries, who had infiltrated the fortress, and also used combustible materials to burn the janissaries in the ditches at the base of the walls.

The Hungarians fought their way to the sultan's camp. Mehmed drew his sword and waded into the attackers. His bravery was beyond reproach. In the furious fighting that followed, he received a severe arrow wound in his thigh. Reasoning that the battle was lost, the Turks fled in panic. Shortly afterwards, Mehmed ordered the execution of several of his generals. As for Hunyadi, he succumbed to an outbreak of the plague. Without the Hungarian general to come to its aid, Serbia was annexed in 1459.

One of Mehmed's top priorities after the conquest of Istanbul was to eliminate the remaining Byzantine dynasts who might attempt to resurrect the Byzantine Empire. This included eradicating the remaining descendents of the Komnenos and Palaeologus imperial dynasties to ensure that they did not try to expand and retake former Byzantine territories now in the possession of the Ottomans. When Thomas and Demetrius Palaeologus, brothers of the slain Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI and rulers of Morea (Peloponnese), refused to pay their annual tribute to the sultan in 1460, Mehmed drove them into exile and annexed the region.

In 1461 Mehmed led an army of more than 100,000 into Anatolia to remove David Komnenos from power in the tiny Empire of Trebizond. The campaign would be noteworthy for the coordination of the Ottoman land and sea forces. One of Mehmed's strengths was his secrecy, which prevented enemies from receiving



The Ottoman bombards proved highly effective at blasting breaches in the thick landward walls of Constantinople during the 1453 siege

advance warning of an attack through deserters and spies. When one of his senior commanders accompanying the expedition asked where they were going, Mehmed replied, "If the hair of my beard knew of my plans, I would pull it out and burn it." He maintained strict secrecy while campaigning in Rumelia, too. For example, in 1466, as he marched through Bulgaria, no one knew whether his objective was Albania, Morea or Serbia. It turned out to be Albania.

The sultan led the army on a gruelling march through mountainous terrain in hostile territory to reach Trebizond. He captured the city after an 11-month siege that ended in August 1461. Afterwards, Mehmed imprisoned David Komnenos and his extended family. Two years later he ordered the execution of David and six of his seven sons. The youngest son, whose life was spared, was raised as a Muslim.

Mehmed strictly adhered to his policy of not allowing a prince to survive in a region that the Ottomans conquered. Following the fall of the Bosnian stronghold of Bobovac to Mehmed in 1463, King Stephen of Bosnia asked the sultan to spare his life. Mehmed granted his request. However, he did so deceitfully, for he did not honour his word to Christians. Stephen was summarily executed. The king was swiftly "put out like a candle," quipped Mahmud Pasha, the Ottoman grand vizier.

In 1473 Mehmed would conduct another major campaign in eastern Anatolia. His objective was to nullify the threat posed by Uzun Hasan, the leader of the White Sheep Turcomans. While maintaining a tight grip on his army, Mehmed's large force crushed the Turcomans at Otlukbeli, capturing 3,000 prisoners in the process. On his return march to Istanbul, Mehmed ordered several hundred of the prisoners executed each day as a warning to other Turcoman tribes not to trifle with the Ottomans.

After removing the Byzantine dynastic threat, Mehmed turned his attention to eliminating threats to his Rumelian territories. He led his army north through the dark forests of Wallachia in 1461 where Vlad III 'The Impaler' Tepes had impaled thousands of Bulgars and Ottomans in an effort to terrify his foes. Vlad not only refused to pay tribute but also conducted frequent raids into Ottoman-controlled northern Bulgaria. Mehmed did not flinch at the horrors but remained tightly focused on his objectives. Mehmed ultimately drove Vlad into exile and struck an agreement with Vlad's more moderate brother Radu III, who became a loyal vassal.

Mehmed's determination to remain focused on his military objectives despite repeated setbacks is most evident in his effort to conquer Albania. In trying to secure the mountainous territory in 1466, he met his greatest foe next to Hunyadi. George Castriot, better known as Skanderbeg, was a former Ottoman governor who had switched sides three years earlier. After switching sides, Skanderbeg fiercely resisted Mehmed's efforts to subjugate feudal Albania. The Ottomans conducted 13 offensives against the Albanians during Mehmed's reign.

The Albanian offensives were part of the broader First Ottoman-Venetian War from 1463 to 1479. Following Skanderbeg's death in 1468, Mehmed ordered all of the Albanian strongholds destroyed or dismantled to remove the threat of guerrilla operations against Ottoman supply lines.

Mehmed the Conqueror expanded the Ottoman Empire with the addition of Albania, Bosnia, Morea and Serbia, thus setting the stage for his successors to invade Hungary. He also consolidated Ottoman territory in Anatolia with the conquest of Trebizond and Karamania.

He was determined, strong-willed and visionary. He was a cunning statesman, an excellent military engineer and an inspiring battlefield commander. Although he acted in ways that might now be regarded as cunning and cruel, in truth they were similar to those exercised by sovereigns in adjoining regions.

Mehmed certainly suffered his fair share of setbacks, such as the failed siege of Belgrade in 1456 and Rhodes in 1480. Yet at the same time he was able to win great victories under extremely arduous circumstances. For his many and varied achievements, he belongs in the pantheon of the greatly feared and respected Ottoman sultans.

OTTOMAN NAVAL POWER

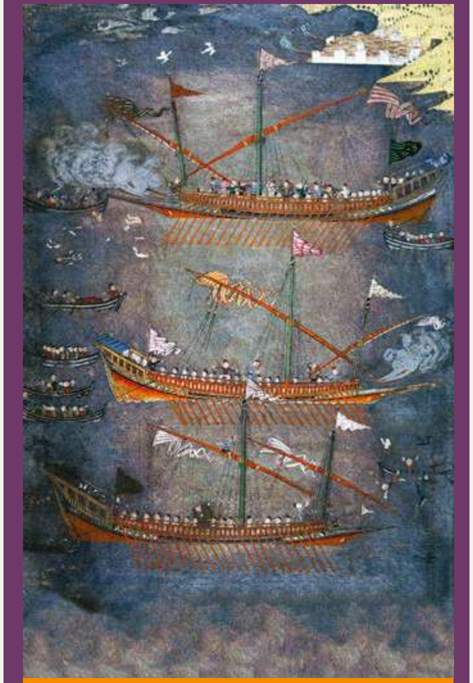
Sultan Mehmed II embarked on a rapid shipbuilding program to put his fleet on par with those of the Latin maritime powers

During Sultan Mehmed II's first decade of rule, he authorised a rapid naval construction program to counter the naval threat posed by Venice and Genoa. Mehmed ordered necessary raw materials to be brought to the shipyards from across the sultanate.

Employing shipwrights from Ottoman-controlled Greece to compensate for the lack of Turkish expertise, Ottoman shipyards at Gallipoli, Istanbul and Izmit built new galleys, fustae, brigantines and transport barges. Greek and Latin sailors from conquered colonies were pressed into service to crew the vessels. The result was a ten-fold increase, from 50 ships when he came to power in 1451 to 500 ships in the final years of his reign.

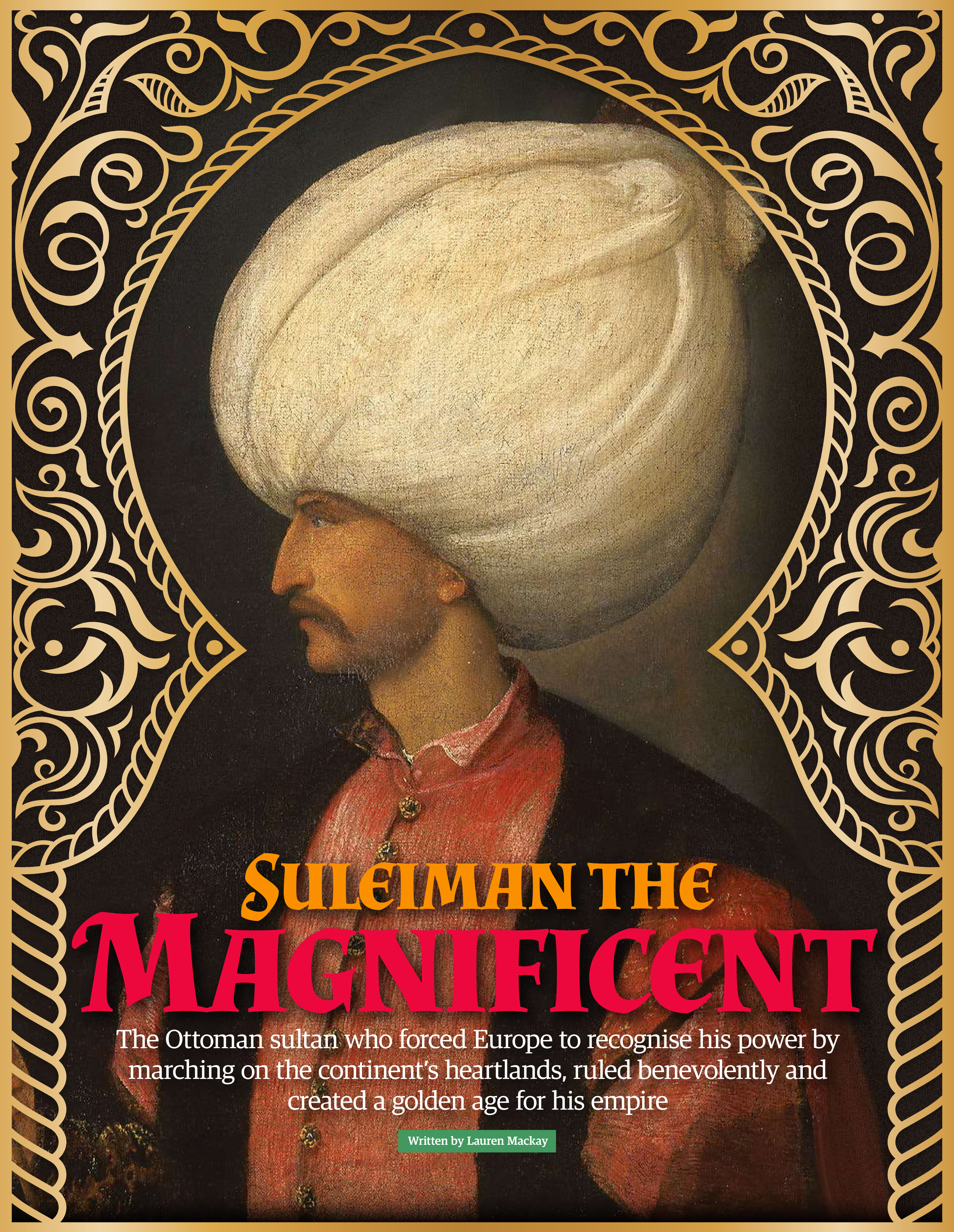
The Ottoman navy enabled Mehmed to project power and make conquests that would not have been possible without naval transport. For example, the Ottoman navy played a pivotal role in the conquest in 1475 of the Genoese trading centre of Kaffa, located in the Crimea.

The fleet not only transported troops to far-flung locations but also conducted raids. The expansion of the Ottoman navy caused great apprehension among the Venetians, who saw it as a threat to their trade and naval bases. It put them on notice that the Ottomans intended to challenge their dominance of the Eastern Mediterranean from that point forward.



Ottoman galleys transported Sultan Mehmed II's troops on expeditions to conquer Latin colonies in the Black Sea region

Images: Alamy, Getty



SULEIMAN THE MAGNIFICENT

The Ottoman sultan who forced Europe to recognise his power by marching on the continent's heartlands, ruled benevolently and created a golden age for his empire

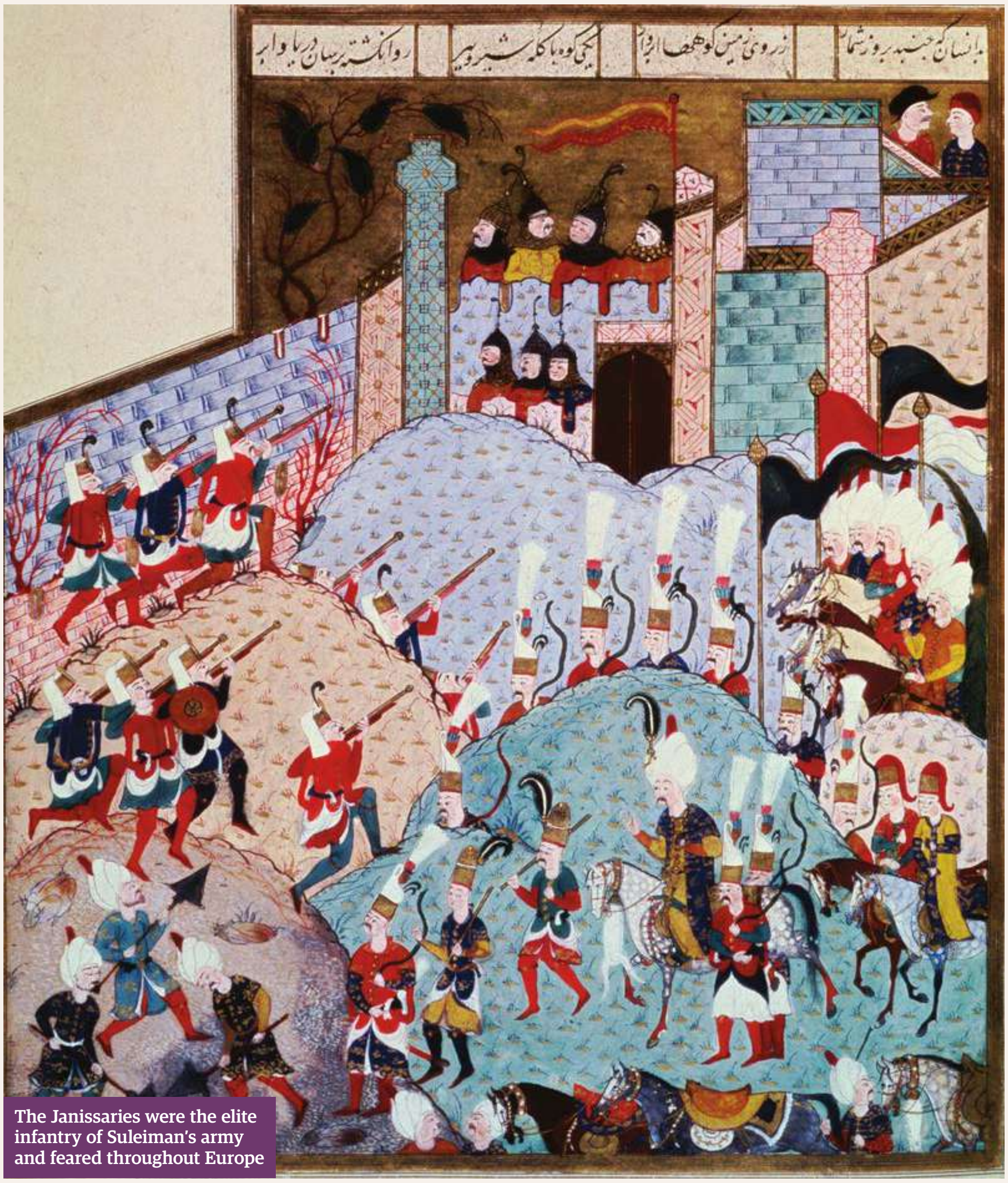
Written by Lauren Mackay

At the beginning of the 16th century, the balance of power in Europe was held by three dynamic young rulers: Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France and Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. News of the accession of the 26-year-old Suleiman I to the throne of the distant Ottoman Empire in 1520 barely raised an eyebrow. But in just over a year, the sultan's name would be known throughout the Western world and in his lifetime Europeans would address him by an even grander title: Suleiman the Magnificent.

Our earliest report about Suleiman describes him as tall with a round face, wiry aquiline nose, a neck that was a little too long, and with piercing hazel eyes and broad forehead. He received a royal education from the age of seven, when he was sent to the bustling Topkapı Palace in the Ottoman capital, Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul).

Among the elegant halls lined with blue, white and turquoise mosaic tiles and surrounded by fine carpets and textiles, famous scholars tutored young Suleiman in history, science, literature, theology and military tactics. He was a gifted poet and a linguist, fluent in five languages – Turkish, Arabic, Chagatai (a Central Asian Turkic dialect), Persian and Serbian. In fact, part of the reason the Europeans were so unconcerned with Suleiman's coronation was that he was known to be scholarly, not a warmonger like his father.

"THE SULTAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED BY STORIES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT"


The Janissaries were the elite infantry of Suleiman's army and feared throughout Europe

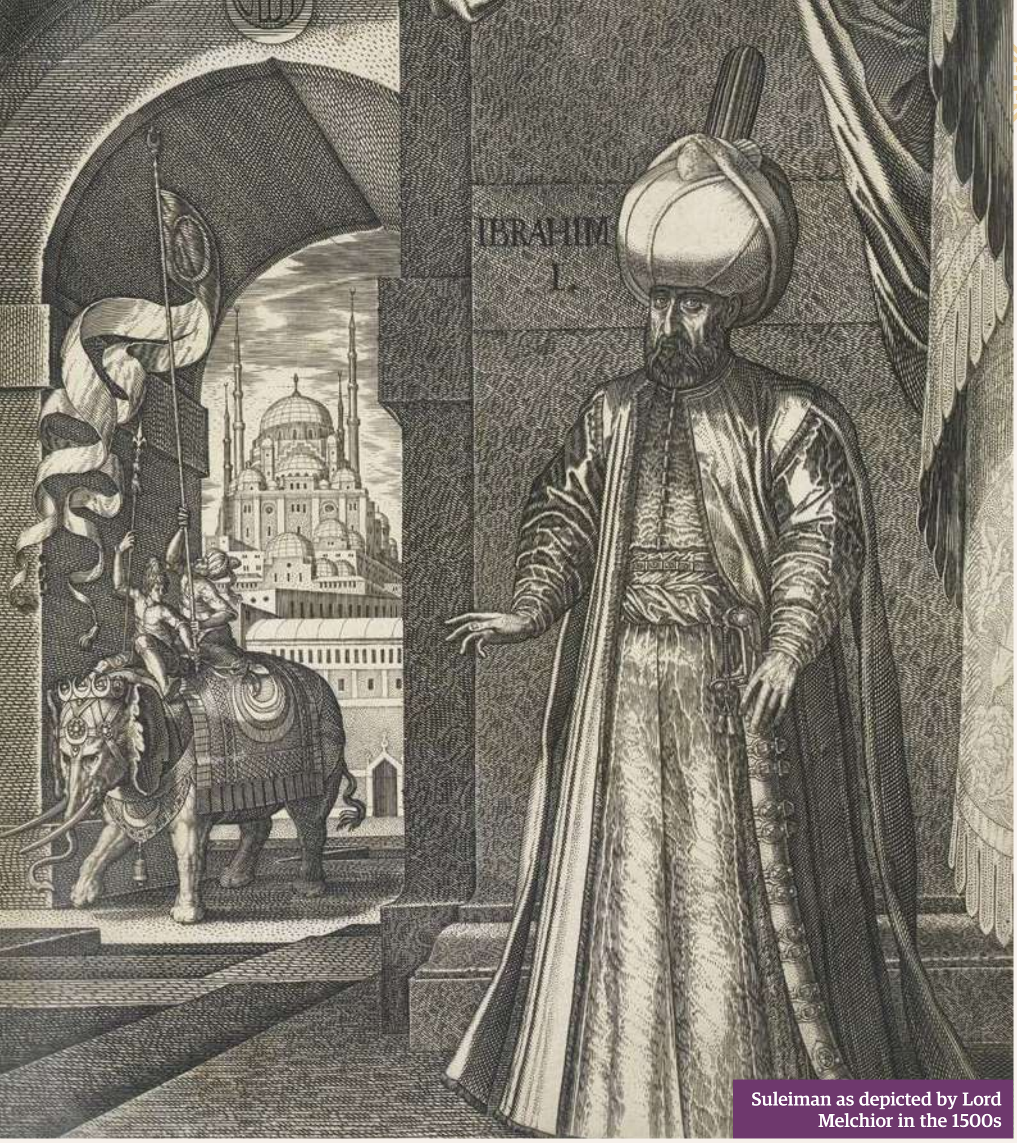
Suleiman's father, Selim I (also known as Selim the Grim), reigned for only eight years, but he left his son in an unrivalled strategic position with a greatly expanded empire after conquering the Egyptian Mamluk Sultanate and the Persian Safavid dynasty. This meant that as well as governing modern-day Greece, Turkey and the coast of the Black Sea, Suleiman inherited Egypt, Libya, Syria, Palestine, the Hejaz region of Saudi Arabia and the Algerian coast. Though Selim had been hostile towards Europe, it was generally assumed that his son would continue expanding further east. But the young, ambitious sultan had other ideas.

Suleiman and Charles V harboured similar ambitions, both significantly greater than their other European counterparts, which would keep the pair on a collision course for most of their reigns. While Henry VIII dreamed of reclaiming France, and in turn Francis fantasised about one day retaking the Duchy of Milan, Charles was fervently dedicated to uniting and expanding Christendom under his own global monarchy. This would include recapturing Jerusalem and even Suleiman's beloved capital, Constantinople. The sultan, on the other hand, was significantly influenced by stories of the Greek hero Alexander the Great and saw himself as taking up the mighty ruler's mantle.

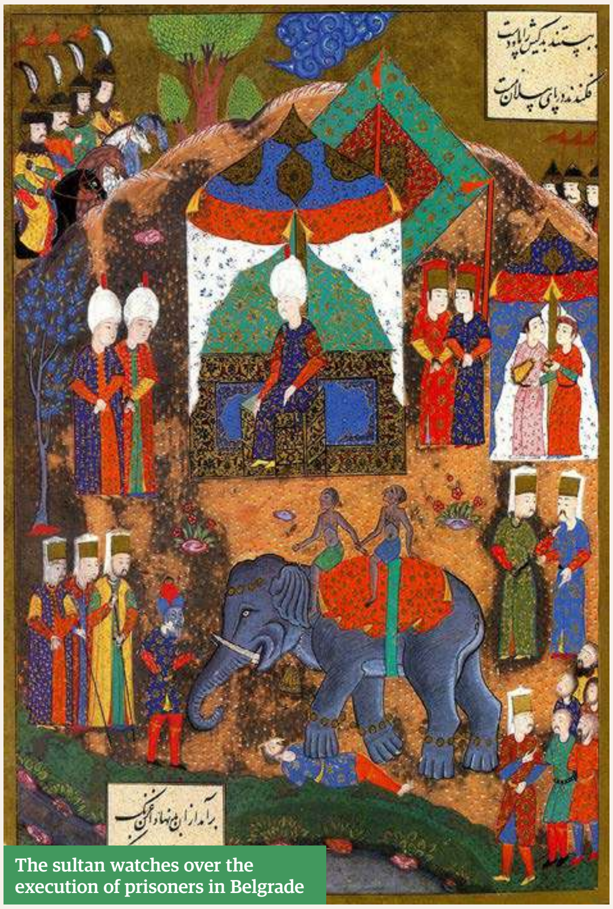
Suleiman may have also envied Charles who, through numerous inheritances, ruled an even greater territory than him. This included swathes of western, central and southern Europe, along with the Spanish colonies in the Americas and Asia. Long before Victorian Britain appropriated it, Charles' realm was described by Spanish priest Fray Francisco de Ugalde as "the empire on which the sun never sets".

Charles, who was also connected to Henry and Francis by marriage (at least until the English king divorced Catherine of Aragon), was a major political player, while Suleiman was an outsider. And yet, as history would show, his influence over the course of the 16th century was immense and, as one biographer wrote, even Charles, the most powerful man in Europe, spent most of his life dancing to the tune called by the sultan.

In July 1521, the newly crowned Suleiman made his intensions very clear: he marched west. At the head of an army of 6,000 horsemen of the imperial guard, the elite infantry units of the Janissaries, foot soldiers and 200 strapping young men from prominent families, the sultan laid siege to Belgrade, a fortified city on the Danube River, then part of the Kingdom of Hungary. With a flotilla of ships also blockading the city to prevent reinforcement, it soon fell. However, unlike Charles' wild and destructive troops sacking Rome in 1527, Suleiman's army provided monetary compensation for property damaged during the invasion and any man caught marauding was immediately executed.



Suleiman as depicted by Lord Melchior in the 1500s


The sultan watches over the execution of prisoners in Belgrade

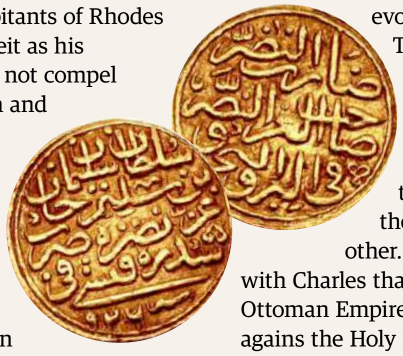
> “His formidable elite infantry were the feared Janissaries”

Suleiman had gained a foothold in Europe’s heartlands, but rather than advance onto the continent further, he turned his attention to the island of Rhodes. This was a Mediterranean stronghold for the Order of the Knights of Saint John, also known as the Knights Hospitaller, who were a hold-over from the Crusades. The knights were already a blight on the Ottoman Empire’s ships, stealing cargoes of grain and gold and enslaving their Muslim crews. Now that Suleiman had declared war on the West, the knights could pose an even greater threat.

The sultan had inherited an already powerful naval fleet from his father and had made a considerable effort to strengthen it. With approximately 400 well-equipped ships and 100,000 fit and loyal men, he emerged victorious in Rhodes in December 1522 – though it took six months of brutal fighting.

Again, Suleiman was shrewdly merciful. Out of his respect for their ardent defence, he gave the knights 12 days to leave and allowed them to take their weapons and any valuables or religious icons they desired. Suleiman also ordered that any inhabitants of the island who wished to leave would be able to do so at any time within a three-year period.

Suleiman chose to rule not through fear but by winning over an otherwise hostile population, and so the inhabitants of Rhodes were encouraged to stay, albeit as his subjects. Importantly, he did not compel the Christians to adopt Islam and he promised that no church would be desecrated or turned into a mosque. In fact, much of Suleiman’s approach to expansion was very diplomatic.



For decades, the Moors and Jews expelled from Spain had flocked to Constantinople, which acquired a reputation for being a city of tolerance; all religions could be practised freely without fear of persecution. These new citizens contributed their skills as merchants, craftsmen and bankers. It is true that all non-Muslims had to pay an additional tax, which contributed to the Ottoman coffers, but they could live in peace.

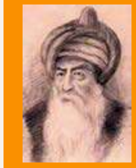
Suleiman sent envoys into the mountain ranges near Transylvania, to the chieftains of the Bosnians and Croats, where he further cultivated loyalty through peaceful relations. In parts of Greece that had come under Ottoman rule, it was reported that farmers actually flourished more than they had under the Venetians. Greek and French merchants enjoyed a thriving trade, and the Ottoman Empire was generally viewed as a realm of stability. What began as a fear of a ‘Turkish Terror’ in Eastern Europe evolved into ‘Pax Turcica’, the Turkish Peace.

Things were not the same in Western Europe. Francis I and Charles V were almost constantly at loggerheads; in the words of Francis’ sister, they were born to hate each other. Interestingly, it was his enmity with Charles that forced Francis to look to the Ottoman Empire as a potential ally in the wars agains the Holy Roman emperor.

When the Holy Roman emperor took Francis hostage after the Battle of Pavia in 1525, the French king’s mother diplomatically suggested a rapprochement with the sultan. Suleiman saw an opportunity, a new way of furthering his position on the chessboard of Europe, and wrote a rousing and reassuring letter of support to Francis. It was a circumspect and subtle beginning to the Franco-Ottoman alliance that would span centuries, one judged by Europe as “the impious alliance” and “the sacrilegious union of the Lily and the Crescent.”

THE SULTAN'S ARCHITECT

Mimar Sinan's creative genius helped forge Suleiman's golden age



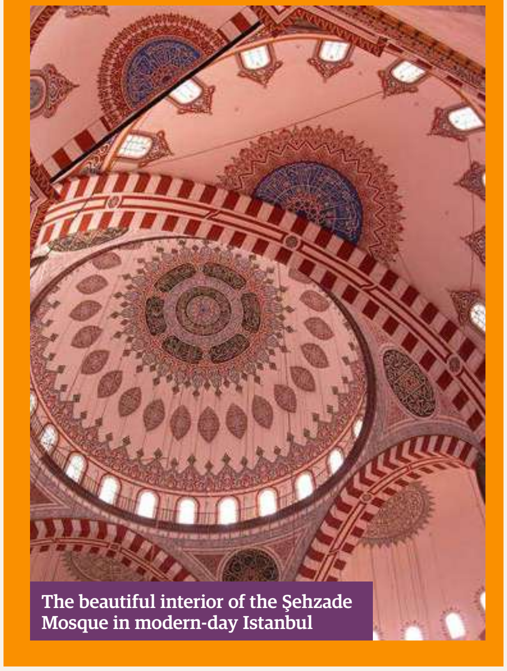
Mimar Sinan was a Janissary in Suleiman's army for most of his early life and eventually became captain of the guard. This allowed him to travel abroad on numerous campaigns to places like Egypt and Greece, inspiring and developing his love for architecture and engineering.

Although he only began his architectural career at the age of 46, his flair and genius were quickly recognised and earned him the position of royal architect. His career spanned three sultans – Suleiman and his two successors, Selim II and Murad II. In their honour, Sinan would complete over 300 structures, ranging from mosques to palaces, baths and pavilions, many of which are considered to be the finest examples of Islamic architecture.

Sinan is most famous for three architectural triumphs: the Şehzade Mosque, built for Suleiman's son Mehmed; the dazzling Süleymaniye Mosque in modern-day Istanbul; and the elegant Mosque of Selim II in Edirne. He was greatly influenced by the 6th-century Byzantine architecture of Constantinople, in particular the Hagia Sophia, whose domes dominated the capital's skyline.

Sinan's works became the apogee of Ottoman architecture as he used the classical dome structure for his mosques, each erected majestically on top of one another, framed by tall, slender minarets and surrounded by peaceful gardens. He began to play with the design, building pyramid-like bases, changing the proportions, opening the interior of the structure, and creating windows to allow more light.

The architect is believed to have remarked, "The Şehzade is my apprentice work, Süleimaniye my achievement, and the Selimiye my masterwork." Yet any visitor to Istanbul would agree that his Süleimaniye Mosque was a triumph of architecture and design, a mesh of angular and spherical surfaces, and today it still stands as a colossal symbol of the Ottoman Empire.

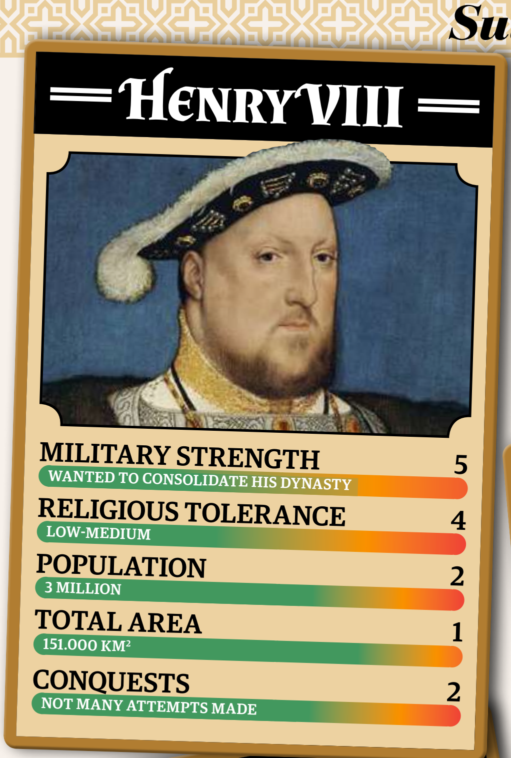


The beautiful interior of the Şehzade Mosque in modern-day Istanbul

Image credits: Muscol (Şehzade Mosque) CC BY-SA 3.0; Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. (coins) CC BY-SA 2.5

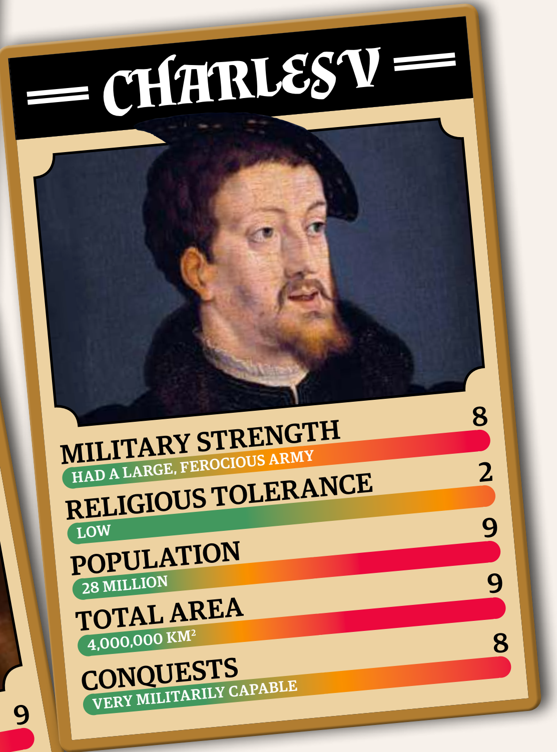
EMPIRE TOP TRUMPS

How do the leaders compare against each other?



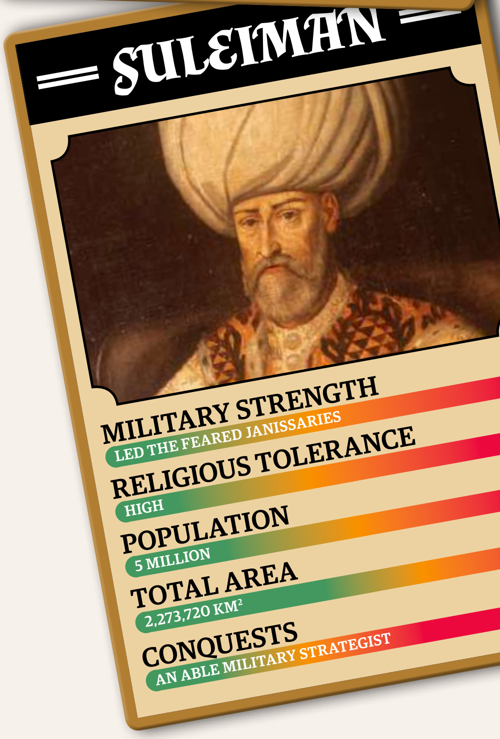
HENRY VIII

MILITARY STRENGTH 5
WANTED TO CONSOLIDATE HIS DYNASTY
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE 4
LOW-MEDIUM
POPULATION 2
3 MILLION
TOTAL AREA 1
151,000 KM²
CONQUESTS 2
NOT MANY ATTEMPTS MADE



CHARLES V

MILITARY STRENGTH 8
HAD A LARGE, FEROCIOUS ARMY
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE 2
LOW
POPULATION 9
28 MILLION
TOTAL AREA 9
4,000,000 KM²
CONQUESTS 8
VERY MILITARILY CAPABLE

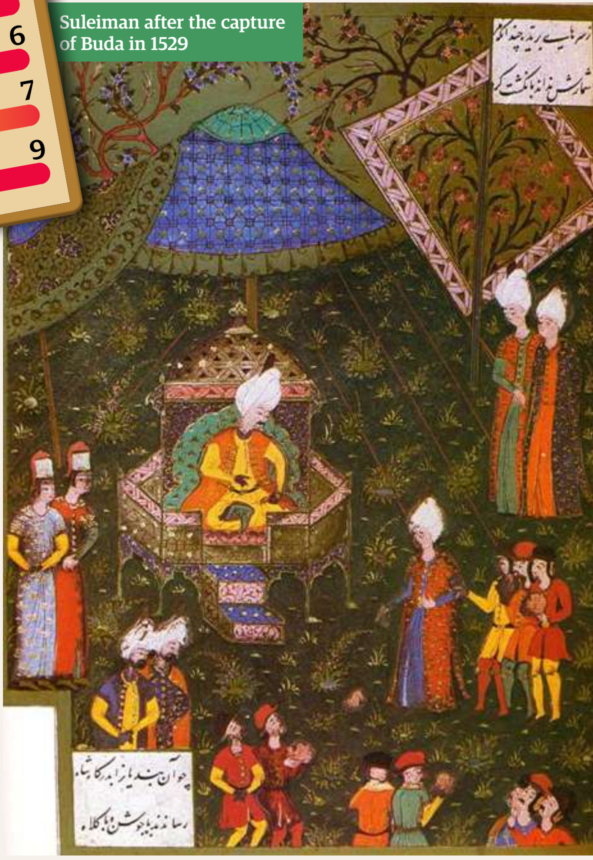


SULEIMAN

MILITARY STRENGTH 9
LED THE FEARED JANISSARIES
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE 9
HIGH
POPULATION 6
5 MILLION
TOTAL AREA 7
2,273,720 KM²
CONQUESTS 9
AN ABLE MILITARY STRATEGIST

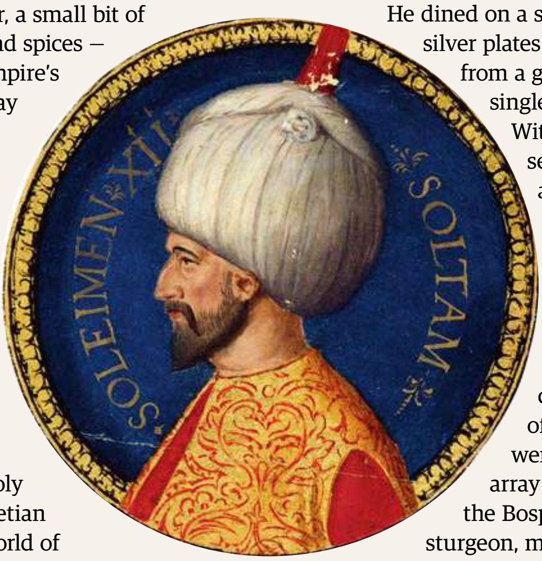
In 1526, Suleiman, with Francis' tacit encouragement, marched on Hungary and defeated their king at the Battle of Mohács. But the Ottomans' most ambitious expedition and thrust towards the West would ultimately result in failure: in 1529, Suleiman marched through the valley of the Danube and laid siege to Vienna. It would be his first defeat and, despite a second attempt in 1532, the very heart of the Holy Roman Empire eluded him.

Still, Suleiman's armies had struck fear among his European counterparts. His formidable elite infantry were the feared Janissaries, formed from prisoners of war and slaves but mostly recruited from Christian children in Greece, Albania and the Balkans. Taken into the heart of the Ottoman Empire, they were trained and tutored to become the finest troops and were the most loyal defenders of the sultan.



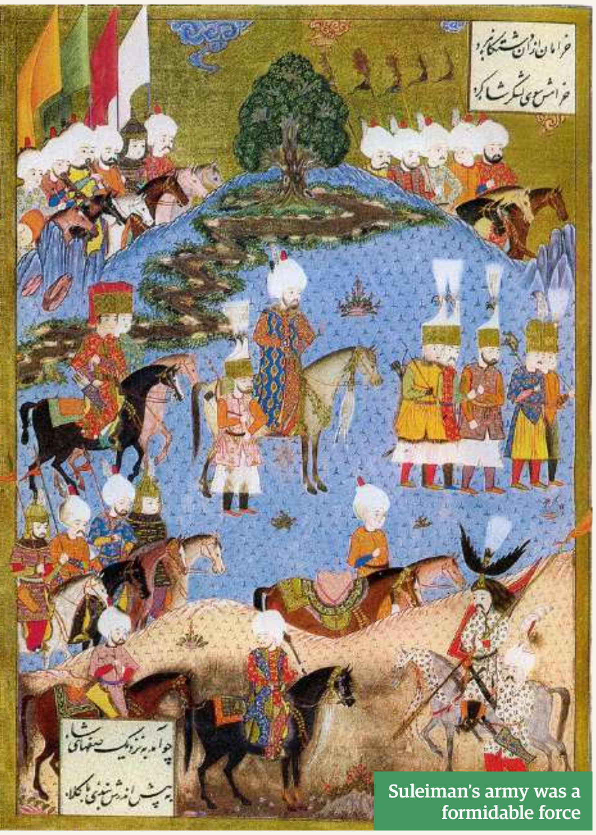
Suleiman after the capture of Buda in 1529

The Austrian ambassador Ogier de Busbecq wrote years later that the sultan's forces showed incredible discipline: they were patient, obedient, never prone to brawling and, above all, fearless. They abstained from alcohol and lived on a diet of turnips, cucumber, garlic, salt and vinegar. They only drank water, which they mixed, once or twice a day, with flour, a small bit of butter, powdered beef and spices – perhaps the Ottoman Empire's answer to the modern day protein shake. Busbecq concluded, "I dread to think what the future holds for us when I compare the Turkish system to ours."



But ambassadors wrote to their monarchs of more than the Ottomans' military might. The details of the Ottoman court itself, described in detail by Holy Roman, French and Venetian ambassadors, reveal a world of grandeur, opulence and refinement. Soon, Ottoman dress, art and culture permeated Europe, becoming highly prized. Throughout Suleiman's reign there was enormous admiration for this inventive, intelligent monarch. Suleiman had once been called the 'Scourge of Heaven' – now he was known as 'the Magnificent'.

Suleiman wore elaborate floor-length caftans made of satins and silks, often lined with sable and patterned in ways that made even the most extravagant of European monarchs look rather drab and pedestrian. He was also partial to shirts made of soft white linen, lined with white cotton faced with rose-coloured silk, all perfumed with aloe wood, and the sultan never wore the same clothes twice.


Suleiman's army was a formidable force

He dined on a silver table using silver plates and drank wine from a goblet made from a single piece of turquoise. With over 50 courses served by 200 attendants wearing red silk and gold-embroidered hats, the sultan and his court would eat in halls filled with thick carpets and cloths of gold. His tables were laden with an array of seafood from the Bosphorus: lobster, sturgeon, muscles, swordfish. Henry VIII may have a reputation for indulgence, even gluttony, but his feasts paled in comparison to Suleiman's.

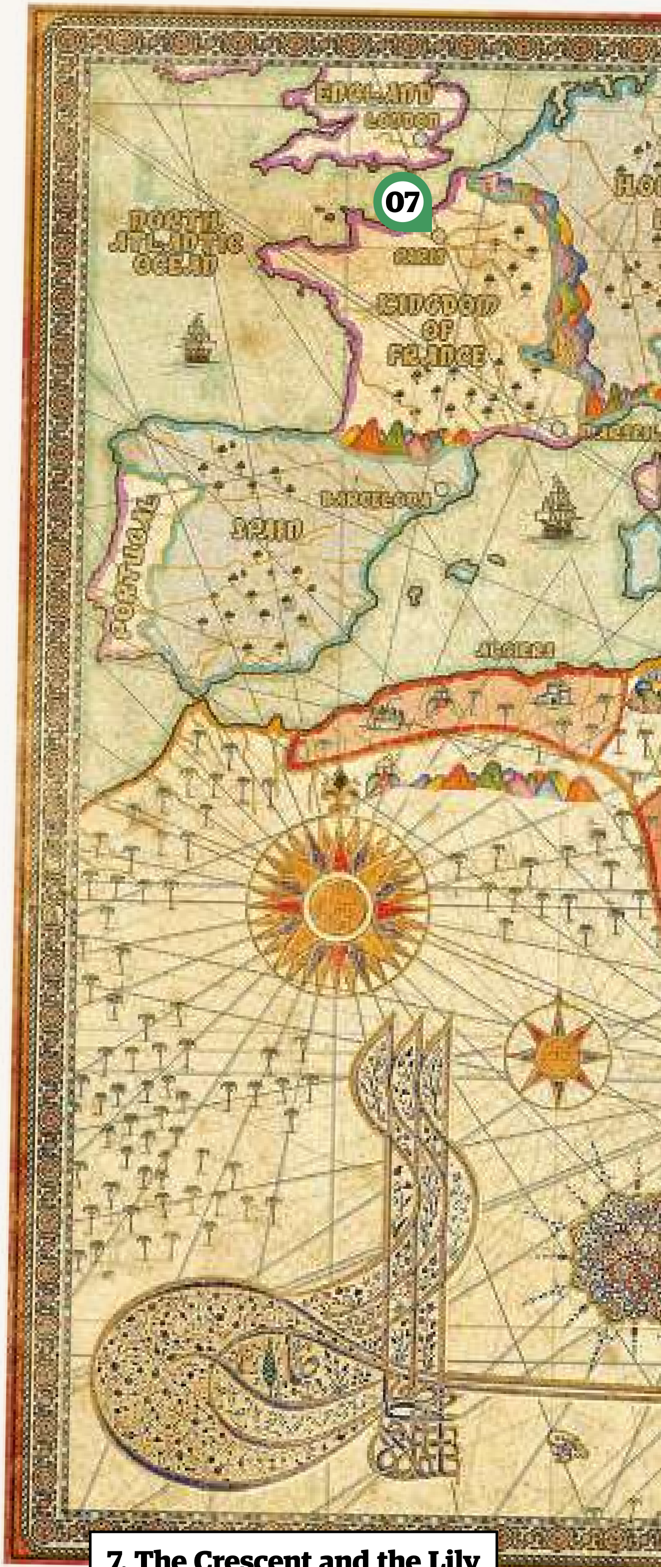
The beauty of Turkish dress and carpets captured the attention and imagination of Europe. From the Doge's Palace in Venice – through which Ottoman art, textiles and culture flowed – to Hampton Court, vibrant textiles and carpets were a symbol of wealth and sophistication. Henry VIII himself, on several occasions, even participated in court masques dressed as a 'Turk'.

In 1532, Venetian merchants sold Suleiman a gold throne studded with jewels and pearls, estimated to cost 40,000 ducats. He sat in his great hall on this throne receiving gifts: cotton from Egypt, damask from Syria; from Mosul, silver plates, cloth of gold and lapis lazuli. Suleiman was particularly fond of Chinese porcelain and he imported furs and Arabian horses. Even on campaigns, the sultan made an impression.

Contemporary descriptions of his triumphal march to Vienna in 1532 describe foot soldiers and cavalry troops followed by standard-bearers carrying flags with Ottoman crescents and the prophet Muhammad's name embroidered in pearls and jewels. 12 pages followed, carrying costly helmets glittering with gemstones. One of the most famous ones was a golden helmet of four crowns, all with enormous 12-carat pearls, diamonds, rubies and a large turquoise stone. It was a triumph of Venetian craftsmanship and, rather curiously, bore a striking resemblance to the papal tiara.

Suleiman rode on a magnificent horse, the saddle of which was estimated to be worth

THE EMPIRE OF SULEIMAN



7. The Crescent and the Lily

The alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire shocked the rest of Christian Europe to its very core. This important foreign alliance was maintained until the Napoleonic wars.

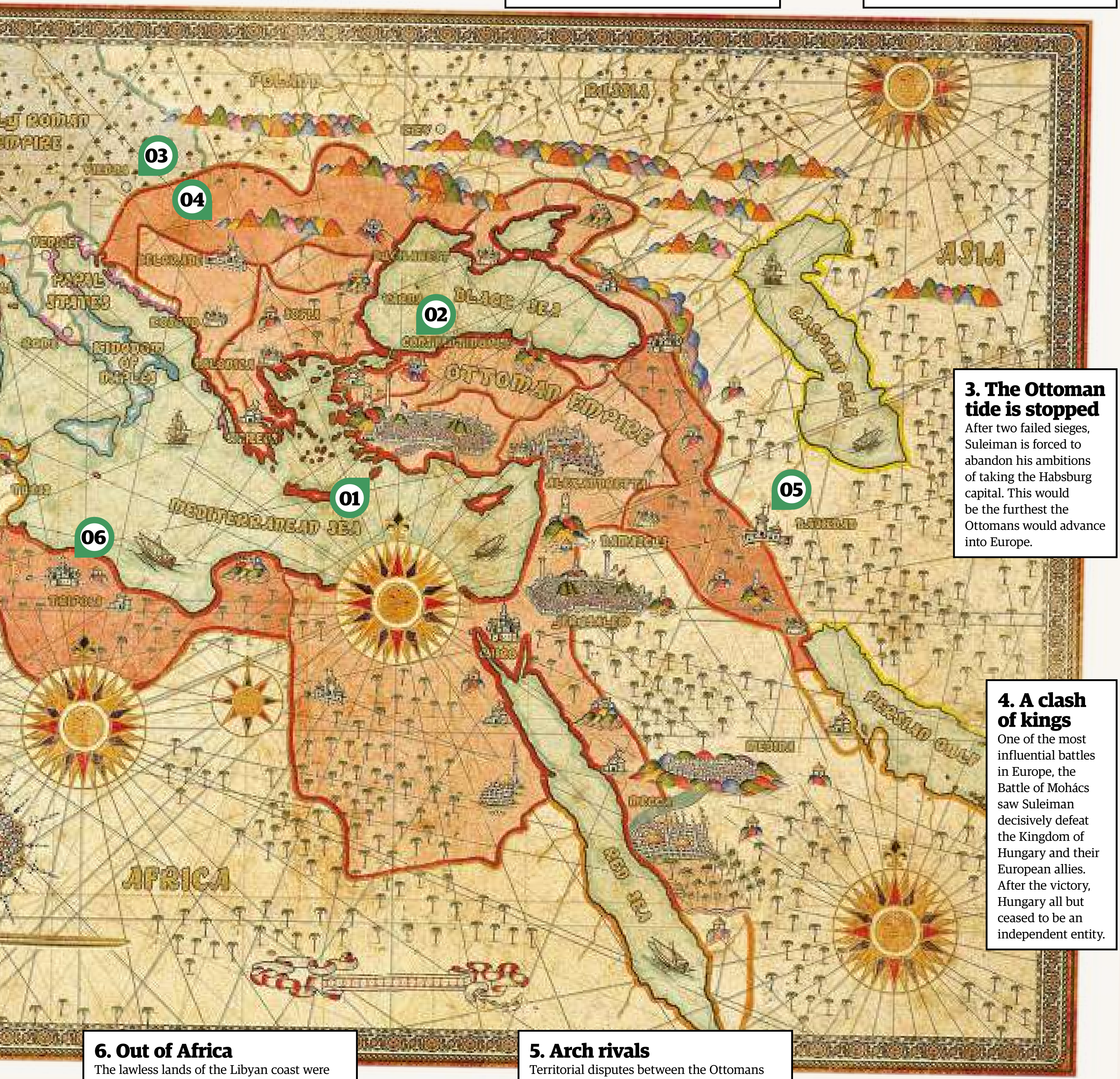
The Ottoman Empire would flourish and grow under Suleiman's leadership

1. End of an era

Garrisoned by the Knights Hospitaller, the island of Rhodes was one of the last Latin strongholds left from the Crusades. After a long and bloody siege, Suleiman's might overcame the order and captured the fortress.

2. The fall of Rome

The city of Constantinople would sit at the heart of the empire. Captured by one of his predecessors, Mehmet II, Suleiman would patronise some of its most iconic landmarks, like the Süleymaniye Mosque.


POLAND
RUSSIA
ly Roman
mpire
Vienna
Venice
Belgrade
Papal States
Rome
Kingdom of Naples
Sofia
Black Sea
Constantinople
Ottoman Empire
Caspian Sea
Asia
Mediterranean Sea
Tripoli
Damascus
Baghdad
Jerusalem
Persian Gulf
Medina
Mecca
Red Sea
Africa
01
02
03
04
05
06

3. The Ottoman tide is stopped

After two failed sieges, Suleiman is forced to abandon his ambitions of taking the Habsburg capital. This would be the furthest the Ottomans would advance into Europe.

4. A clash of kings

One of the most influential battles in Europe, the Battle of Mohács saw Suleiman decisively defeat the Kingdom of Hungary and their European allies. After the victory, Hungary all but ceased to be an independent entity.

5. Arch rivals

Territorial disputes between the Ottomans and the neighbouring Safavid dynasty of Iran saw war break out in 1532. The capture of Baghdad in 1534 solidified Suleiman's rule in parts of Mesopotamia for the next 100 years.

6. Out of Africa

The lawless lands of the Libyan coast were brought under Ottoman rule with the capture of Tripoli in 1551. From this base, the Barbary pirates would have free reign to attack shipping throughout the Mediterranean.

KEY

🟥 Empire conquered by Suleiman
🟧 Empire inherited by Suleiman
🟦 Empire of Charles V

ROXELANA: THE OTTOMAN ANNE BOLEYN

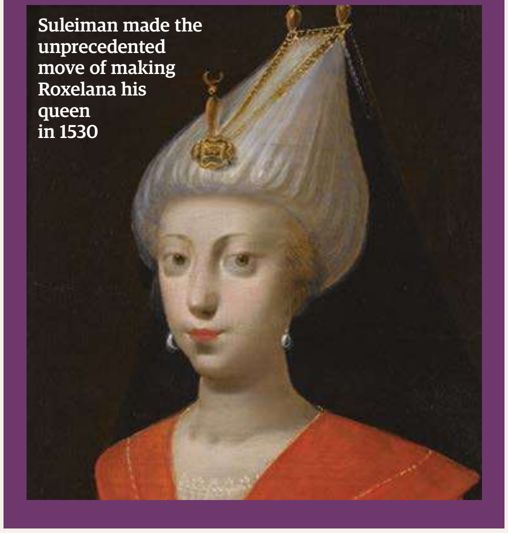
Roxelana's astonishing success at Suleiman's court was attributed not only to her beauty but also to her intelligence and ambition

A young woman appeared at Suleiman's court in 1523, captured by Turkish raiders in Galatia. It is believed that she was originally from Ruthenia, in present-day Ukraine, and so she was given the nickname 'Roxelana', meaning 'the Russian' or the 'Ruthenian One'. She was fair with long red hair and, while in the sultan's harem, her beauty, bright, witty nature and sharp intelligence caught the sultan's eye and she soon became a favourite. But this was only the beginning.

Suleiman made the unprecedented move of forsaking all other women in his harem and became devoted only to Roxelana. It was rumoured that she ensured things would stay that way by burning the harem down so that to remain with her beloved she had to move into the sultan's apartments until a new harem could be rebuilt. It never was.

Such was Suleiman's unwavering devotion to her that he made her chief consort, supplanting Mahidevran, mother to the sultan's only son. But it was his unprecedented decision to marry Roxelana, making her his queen, that astounded the country as it broke with centuries of tradition. As with so many powerful and influential women, it was rumoured by those who resented Roxelana's success that she had 'bewitched' the sultan. Certainly his poems to Roxelana remain some of the most famous and passionate love poems of the age and suggest a man utterly entranced.

But Roxelana was an extraordinary woman. She was intelligent, ambitious, charitable and strategic. She was not only wife and queen, but for many years she served as Suleiman's chief advisor on matters of state and she played an influential role in foreign and domestic politics. She had numerous political rivals, namely Suleiman's loyal friend and advisor Ibrahim Pasha, with whom she was locked in a deadly battle for Suleiman's favour and from which she emerged triumphant.



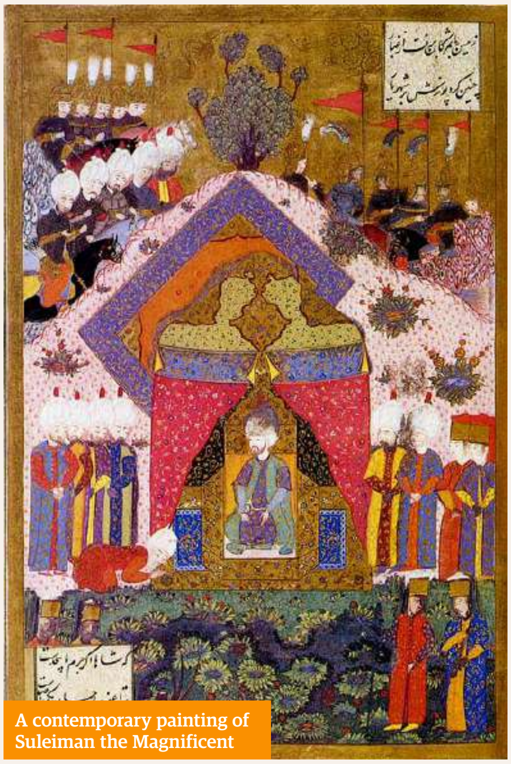
Suleiman made the unprecedented move of making Roxelana his queen in 1530

70,000 ducats, while its chamfron – the plate designed to protect the horse's face – boasted a piece of turquoise as large as an egg. The sultan wore a large turban and a fur-lined gold brocade caftan of royal purple embroidered with jewels. Around his neck, he wore a gold chain that was so heavy it required attendants to ride on both sides to relieve the weight.

Suleiman earned the admiration of visitors to his court. Ambassador Busbecq was impressed by his wise approach to advisors and councillors. He wrote that "in making his appointments the sultan pays no regard to any pretensions on the score of wealth or rank, nor does he take into consideration recommendations or popularity; he considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character, ability, and disposition of the man. Each man carries in his own hand his ancestry and his position in life, which he may make or mar as he will."

While the Europeans described Suleiman as magnificent for his opulence, his subjects gave him the title of 'Kanuni', meaning 'Lawgiver'. He embarked on a series of administrative reviews and made major legislative changes in the areas of education, taxation and criminal law. His reforms assisted in bridging the two forms of Ottoman law, sultanic and Sharia, and were called 'Qanun-e-Osmani', or the 'Ottoman Laws'. These would stay in place for three centuries.

Suleiman was also a great patron of artists and philosophers. Artists and skilled calligraphers, such as Ahmad Karahisari and Kara Memi, were welcome at court. The sultan financed developments in numerous fields, particularly manuscript painting, textiles and ceramics.

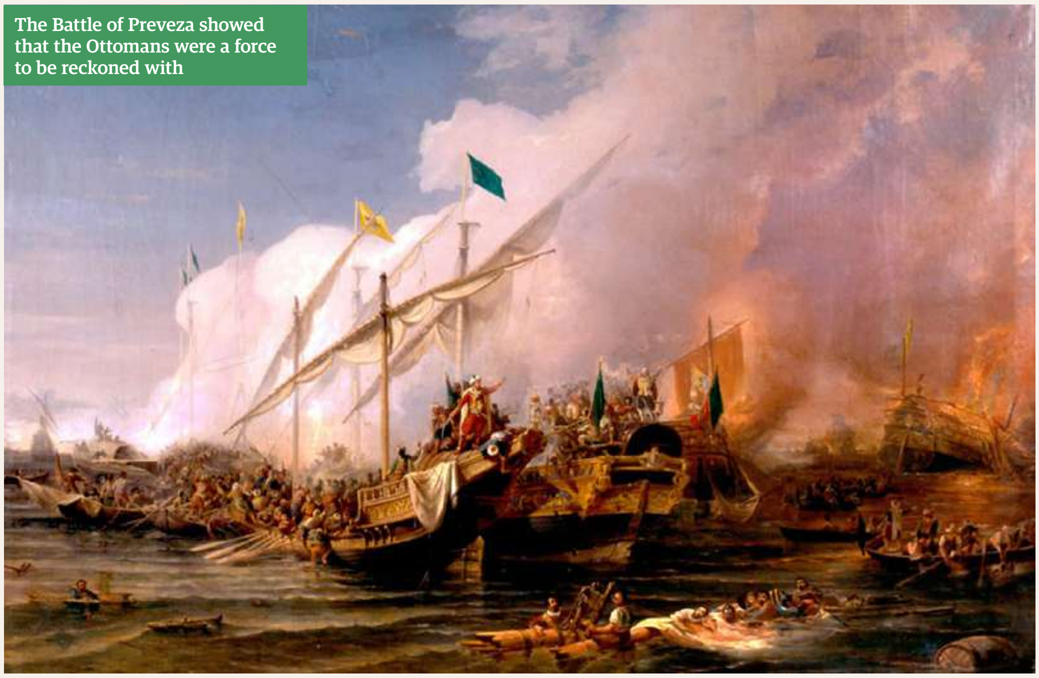


A contemporary painting of Suleiman the Magnificent

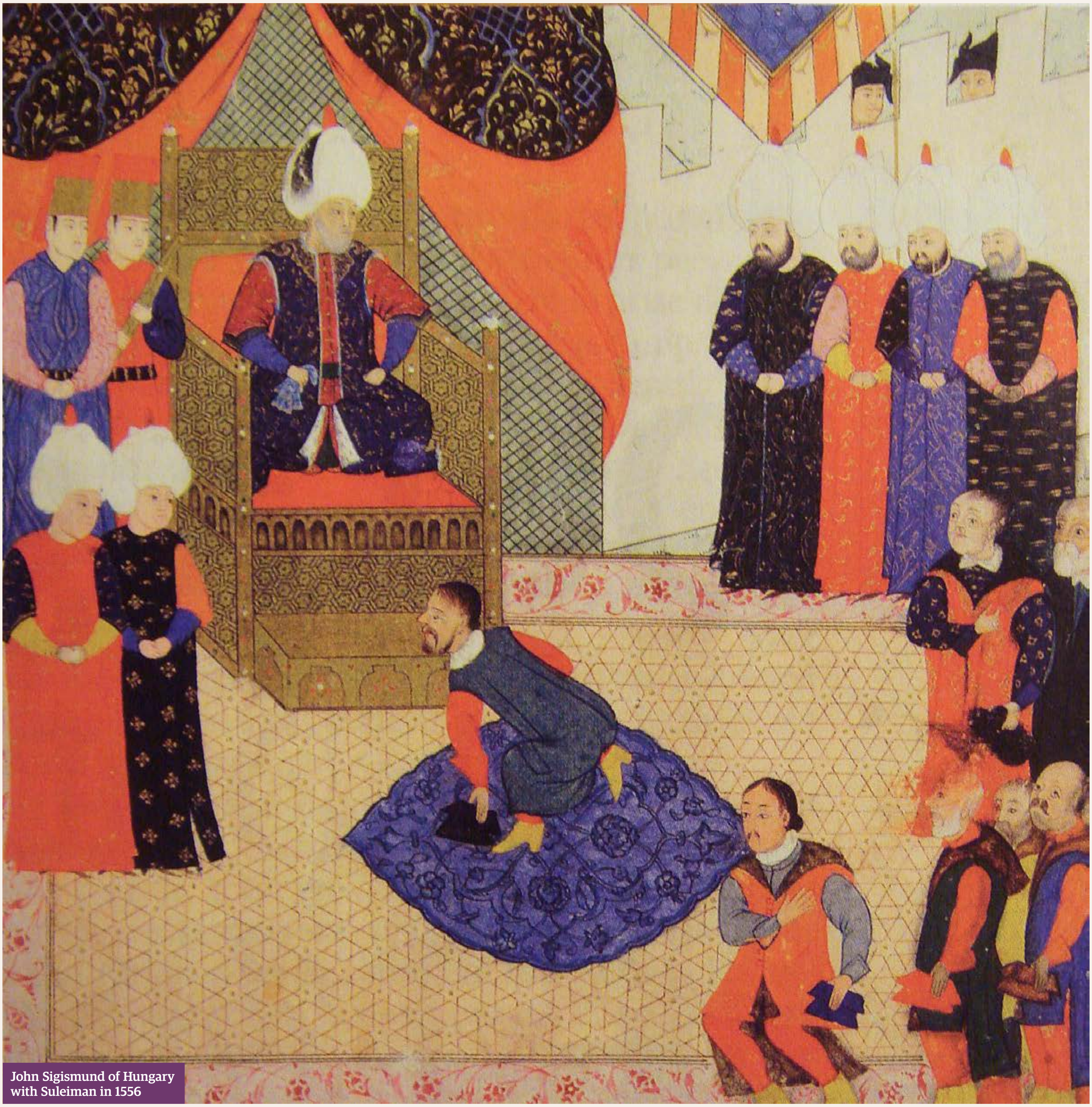
In his youth, as with most sultans, Suleiman learned a trade, in his case goldsmithing, and he personally oversaw the work of craftsmen in Topkapı Palace. He also commissioned an ambitious building programme and was a patron of the great architect, Mimar Sinan, who built the iconic Süleymaniye and Selimiye Mosques.

Suleiman loved poetry and considered himself something of a poet, writing under

> "Suleiman was also a great patron of artists and philosophers"



The Battle of Preveza showed that the Ottomans were a force to be reckoned with



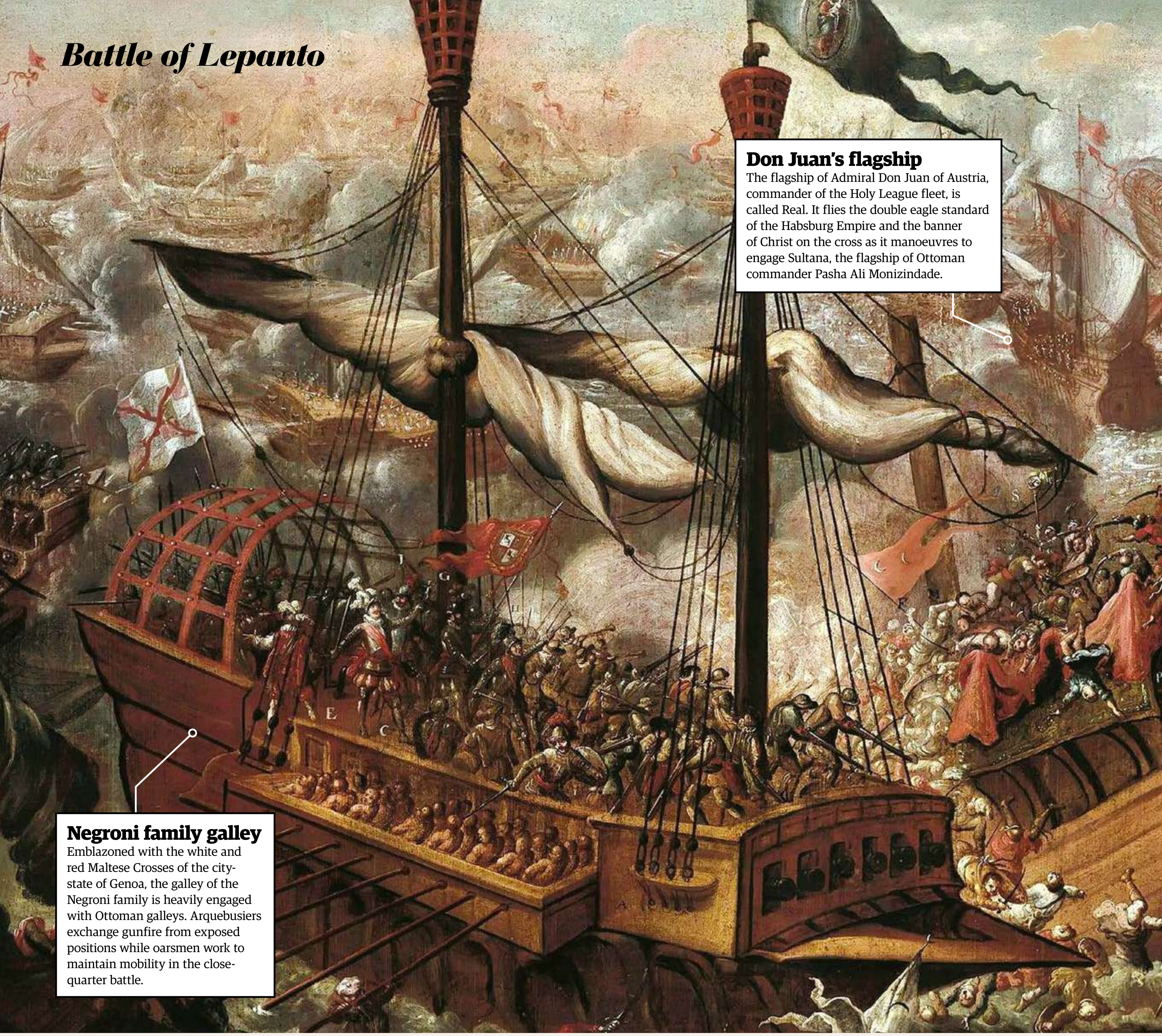
John Sigismund of Hungary with Suleiman in 1556

the pseudonym 'Muhabbi', meaning 'beloved and affectionate friend'. His works have been described as "lyrical, mystical, humble and sincere" and he focused on the loneliness of his position, his love of his country, his acceptance of destiny and his love of beautiful things.

Above all, he wrote passionate poetry to the woman who would convert to Islam to be with him and transcend her lowly position to stand by his side as queen – Roxelana. Towards the end of his reign, however, Suleiman gave up his rich costumes, jewels, gold, wine, poetry and music.

Suleiman seemed to prefer religious humility in his old age. He died aged 72, fighting Charles' successor, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. His death was kept secret lest it destroy morale. In keeping with tradition, his body was washed, hands laid across his chest, and his nose, eyes and ears were stuffed with cotton wool. He was then wrapped in a single piece of silk and buried in his beloved Süleymaniye Mosque facing Mecca.

At the time of his death, Suleiman was the longest-reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire and he had outlived his European adversaries, with whom he had spent decades in enmity and alliance. Never again would the Ottoman Empire command such respect and admiration.



Don Juan's flagship
The flagship of Admiral Don Juan of Austria, commander of the Holy League fleet, is called Real. It flies the double eagle standard of the Habsburg Empire and the banner of Christ on the cross as it manoeuvres to engage Sultana, the flagship of Ottoman commander Pasha Ali Monizindade.

Negroni family galley
Emblazoned with the white and red Maltese Crosses of the city-state of Genoa, the galley of the Negroni family is heavily engaged with Ottoman galleys. Arquebusiers exchange gunfire from exposed positions while oarsmen work to maintain mobility in the close-quarter battle.

BATTLE OF LEPANTO

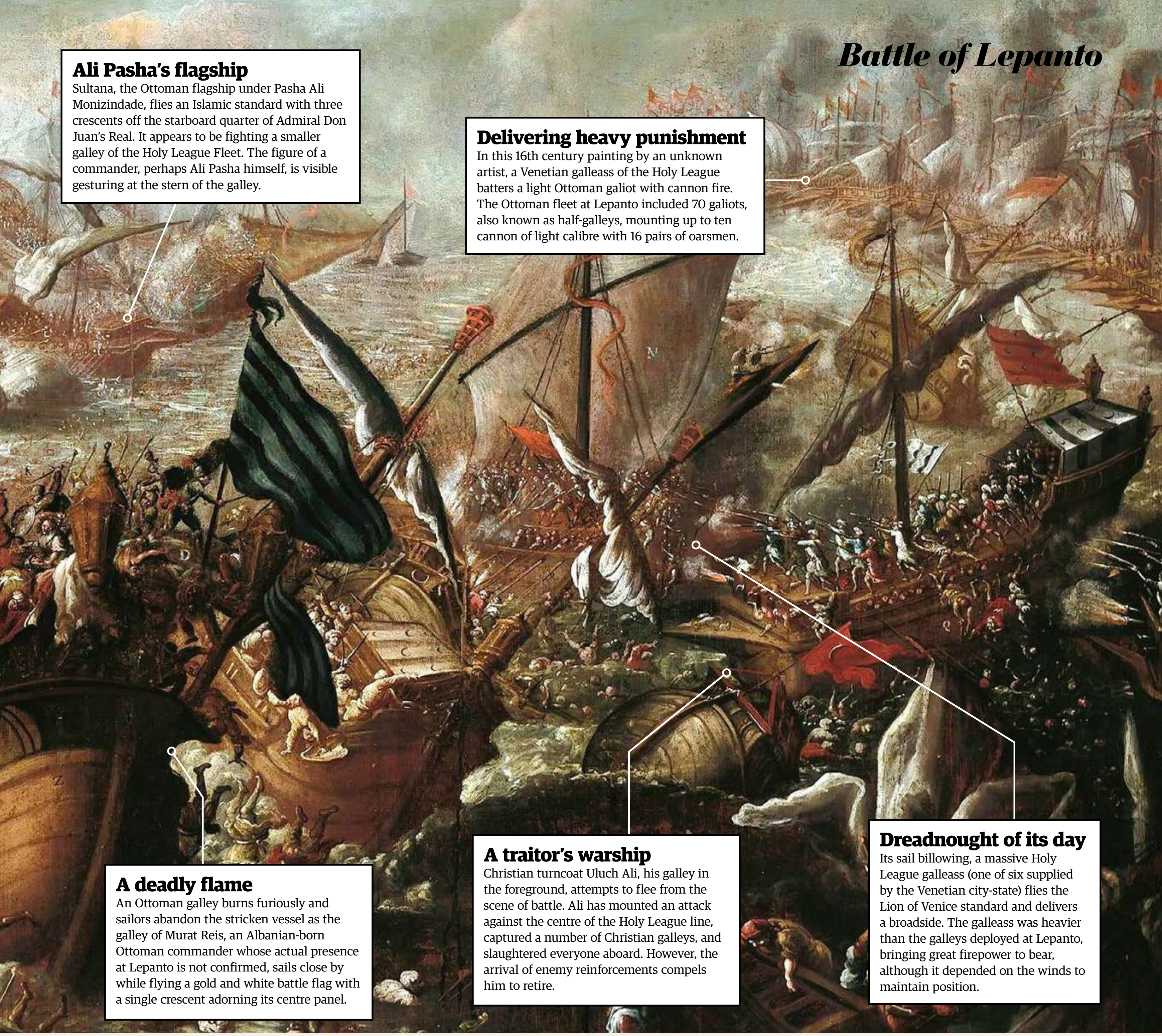
Lepanto, Gulf of Patras, Ionian Sea
7 October 1571

Written by Michael Haskew

The galley, a ship dating back to antiquity, and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into the Mediterranean Sea, both met their end at the Battle of Lepanto.

The Ottoman invasion of Cyprus in 1570 resulted in the occupation of the island and the slaughter of the defenders of Famagusta, the final Venetian stronghold. The Ottoman Empire, ruled by Sultan Selim II, threatened further westward encroachment. Pope Pius V formed the Holy League to turn back an assault on European Christendom.

Poised to strike westward, the Ottoman fleet and its commander Pasha Ali Monizindade anchored at Lepanto, 230 galleys and 70 faster galiots strong. The Holy League fleet assembled at the Sicilian port of Messina under Don Juan of Austria, the 25-year-old half-brother of King Philip II of Spain, including



Ali Pasha's flagship
Sultana, the Ottoman flagship under Pasha Ali Monizindade, flies an Islamic standard with three crescents off the starboard quarter of Admiral Don Juan's Real. It appears to be fighting a smaller galley of the Holy League Fleet. The figure of a commander, perhaps Ali Pasha himself, is visible gesturing at the stern of the galley.

Delivering heavy punishment
In this 16th century painting by an unknown artist, a Venetian galleass of the Holy League batters a light Ottoman galiot with cannon fire. The Ottoman fleet at Lepanto included 70 galiots, also known as half-galleys, mounting up to ten cannon of light calibre with 16 pairs of oarsmen.

A deadly flame
An Ottoman galley burns furiously and sailors abandon the stricken vessel as the galley of Murat Reis, an Albanian-born Ottoman commander whose actual presence at Lepanto is not confirmed, sails close by while flying a gold and white battle flag with a single crescent adorning its centre panel.

A traitor's warship
Christian turncoat Uluch Ali, his galley in the foreground, attempts to flee from the scene of battle. Ali has mounted an attack against the centre of the Holy League line, captured a number of Christian galleys, and slaughtered everyone aboard. However, the arrival of enemy reinforcements compels him to retire.

Dreadnought of its day
Its sail billowing, a massive Holy League galleass (one of six supplied by the Venetian city-state) flies the Lion of Venice standard and delivers a broadside. The galleass was heavier than the galleys deployed at Lepanto, bringing great firepower to bear, although it depended on the winds to maintain position.

206 galleys and six heavy galleasses mounting more than 40 cannon each. The Republic of Venice supplied the galleasses and 105 galleys, while the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily – part of the Spanish Empire – contributed 49, and the Republic of Genoa 27. The Papal States, Grand Duchies of Tuscany and Savoy, and Knights Hospitaller contributed less.

The Holy League fleet sailed in mid-September with nearly 29,000 soldiers and 40,000 oarsmen and sailors. Among the Holy League troops were fine Spanish infantrymen, whose expertise with the arquebus, an early firearm, would provide a distinct advantage in the coming battle. Ali Pasha mustered over 31,000 soldiers and 50,000 sailors and oarsmen for the Ottoman fleet, many of them Christian slaves.

When the fleets came in sight of one another, both commanders hastened to engage. Don Juan worried that winds would prohibit the formation of a battle line; however, at the critical moment the winds shifted. His warships took stations, those to the left under Venetian commander Agostino Barbarigo, on the right under Gianandrea Doria of Genoa, and in the centre under Don Juan with Sebastiano Venier of Venice and Marcantonio Colonna of Rome in support. Don Alvaro de Bazan, Spanish Marquis of Santa Cruz, commanded the reserve.

As the Ottoman galleys approached, the heavy cannon of the Venetian galleasses lashed the enemy. On the Ottoman right, Mehmed Sirocco's swift galiots sliced between Barbarigo's galleys. The Venetian commander turned sharply, trapping the enemy against the north shoreline of the Gulf of Patras. A wild melee ensued as galleys pulled alongside galleys, troops trading arquebus fire and clouds of arrows. Barbarigo held the line but died with an arrow penetrating his eye. Sirocco also fell.

In the centre, the opposing flagships locked in combat, as the Spanish infantry fought the Ottoman Janissaries. Don Juan suffered a leg wound, but a lead ball through the head killed Ali Pasha. Their commander's death panicked the Turks in the centre. On the Holy League right, the critical moment was reached as Uluch Ali led Turkish galleys through a gap near Doria's position. The Holy League reserve raced to the rescue. Don Alvaro contained the enemy flanking and supported Gianandrea Doria.

With that, the Ottoman fleet disintegrated. Only Uluch Ali's command survived with few losses. Over 130 Ottoman vessels were taken and 50 sunk. The Turks lost 30,000 men. Holy League losses, however, totalled 7,500 dead.

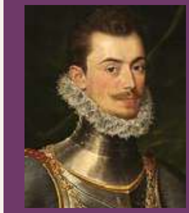
HOLY LEAGUE FLEET

TROOPS 29,000

SAILORS 40,000

CANNON 1,800

WARSHIPS 212

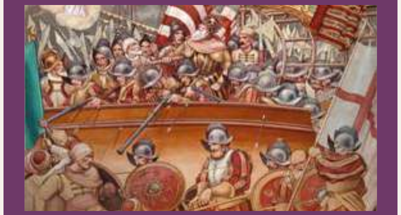


DON JUAN OF AUSTRIA
LEADER

Don Juan was a proven military commander on land, experienced beyond his years by Lepanto.

STRENGTHS Don Juan maintained a tenuous coalition and unity of command.

WEAKNESS Although a veteran warrior, Don Juan lacked naval combat experience.

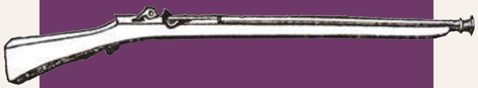


HOLY LEAGUE INFANTRYMEN
KEY UNIT

The infantrymen aboard the Holy League vessels at Lepanto performed admirably, particularly elite Spanish arquebusiers aboard Don Juan's flagship.

STRENGTHS Holy League infantry demonstrated expertise with the muzzleloading arquebus firearm.

WEAKNESS On unstable shipboard platforms, infantrymen were vulnerable to Ottoman archers.

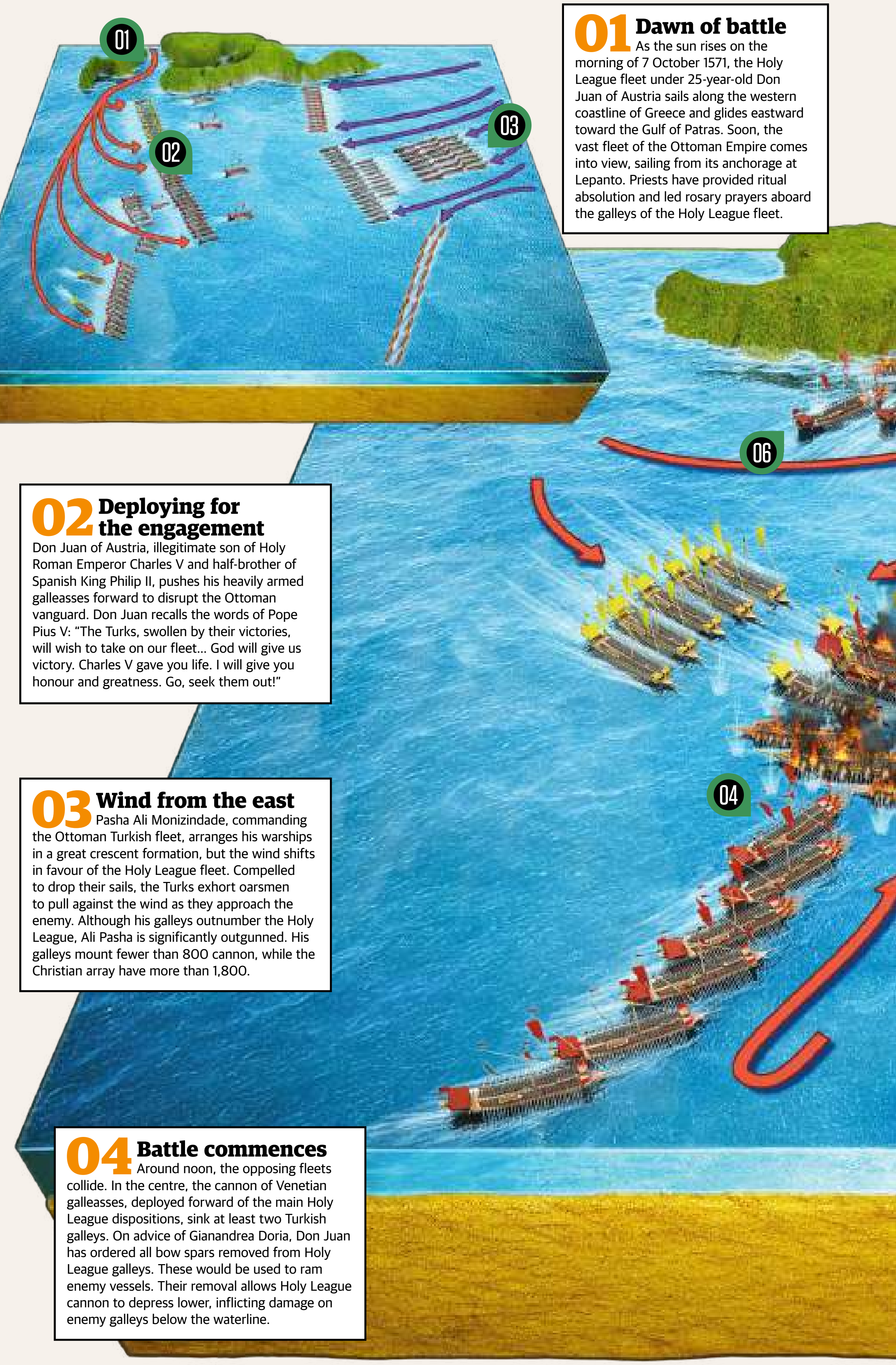


ARQUEBUS
KEY WEAPON

The arquebus was an early muzzleloading smoothbore matchlock firearm.

STRENGTHS The arquebus offered firepower, sometimes concentrated, against somewhat distant enemies.

WEAKNESS The arquebus was cumbersome to operate, particularly at close range.



01 Dawn of battle

As the sun rises on the morning of 7 October 1571, the Holy League fleet under 25-year-old Don Juan of Austria sails along the western coastline of Greece and glides eastward toward the Gulf of Patras. Soon, the vast fleet of the Ottoman Empire comes into view, sailing from its anchorage at Lepanto. Priests have provided ritual absolution and led rosary prayers aboard the galleys of the Holy League fleet.

02 Deploying for the engagement

Don Juan of Austria, illegitimate son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and half-brother of Spanish King Philip II, pushes his heavily armed galleasses forward to disrupt the Ottoman vanguard. Don Juan recalls the words of Pope Pius V: "The Turks, swollen by their victories, will wish to take on our fleet… God will give us victory. Charles V gave you life. I will give you honour and greatness. Go, seek them out!"

03 Wind from the east

Pasha Ali Monizindade, commanding the Ottoman Turkish fleet, arranges his warships in a great crescent formation, but the wind shifts in favour of the Holy League fleet. Compelled to drop their sails, the Turks exhort oarsmen to pull against the wind as they approach the enemy. Although his galleys outnumber the Holy League, Ali Pasha is significantly outgunned. His galleys mount fewer than 800 cannon, while the Christian array have more than 1,800.

04 Battle commences

Around noon, the opposing fleets collide. In the centre, the cannon of Venetian galleasses, deployed forward of the main Holy League dispositions, sink at least two Turkish galleys. On advice of Gianandrea Doria, Don Juan has ordered all bow spars removed from Holy League galleys. These would be used to ram enemy vessels. Their removal allows Holy League cannon to depress lower, inflicting damage on enemy galleys below the waterline.

10 The galley's last hurrah

Ushering in the age of sail, the last major naval battle between galleys and one of the largest naval battles in history ends as remnants of the Ottoman fleet withdraw.

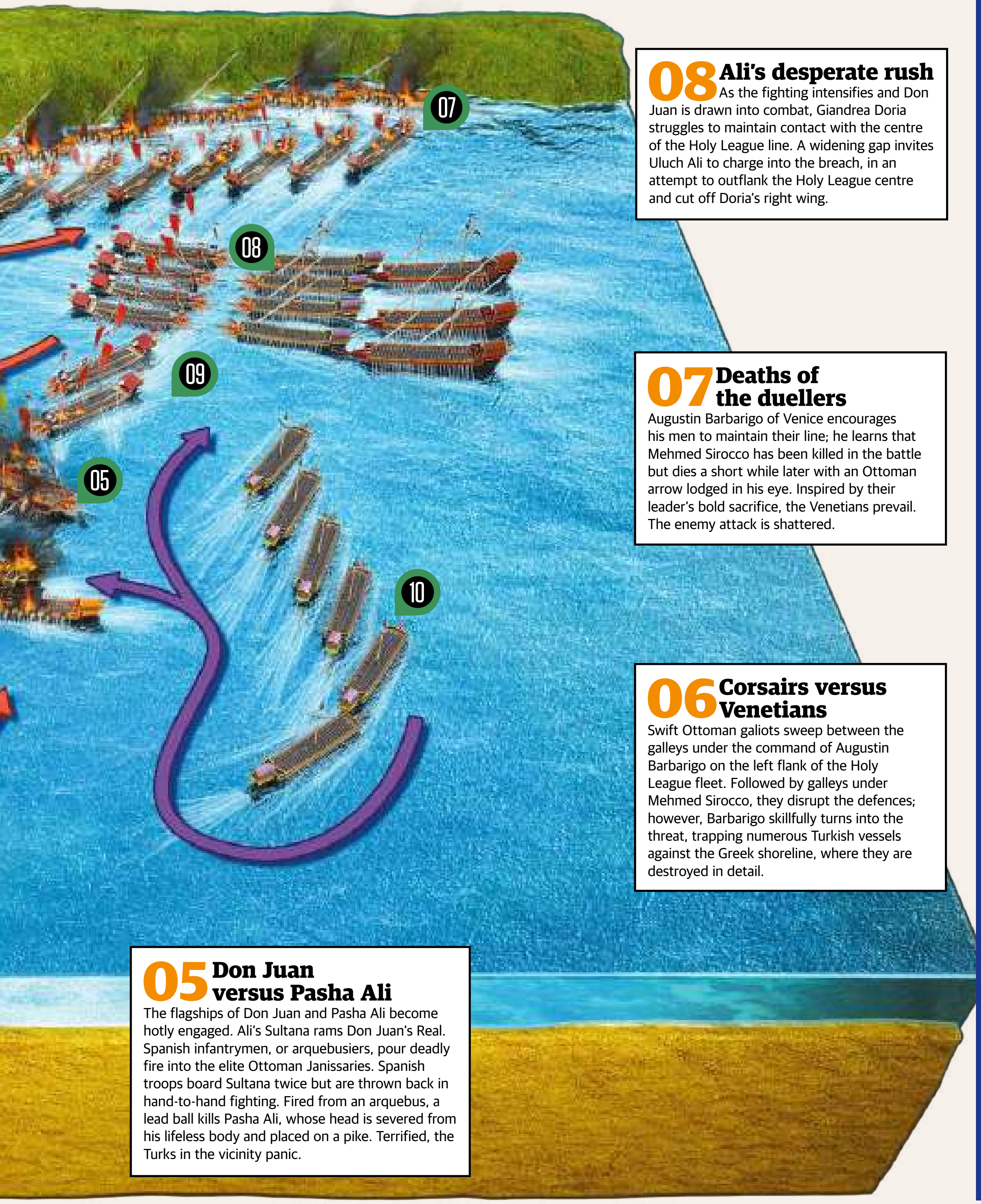
09 Timely arrival of Don Alvaro

The Holy League reserve, 35 galleys under Spain's Don Alvaro de Bazan, holds off Uluch Ali's flanking assault on the centre and then bolsters Doria to blunt the Ottoman threat.

KEY

🟪 Ottoman Fleet

🟥 Holy League Fleet



08 Ali's desperate rush

As the fighting intensifies and Don Juan is drawn into combat, Giandrea Doria struggles to maintain contact with the centre of the Holy League line. A widening gap invites Uluch Ali to charge into the breach, in an attempt to outflank the Holy League centre and cut off Doria's right wing.

07 Deaths of the duellers

Augustin Barbarigo of Venice encourages his men to maintain their line; he learns that Mehmed Sirocco has been killed in the battle but dies a short while later with an Ottoman arrow lodged in his eye. Inspired by their leader's bold sacrifice, the Venetians prevail. The enemy attack is shattered.

06 Corsairs versus Venetians

Swift Ottoman galiots sweep between the galleys under the command of Augustin Barbarigo on the left flank of the Holy League fleet. Followed by galleys under Mehmed Sirocco, they disrupt the defences; however, Barbarigo skillfully turns into the threat, trapping numerous Turkish vessels against the Greek shoreline, where they are destroyed in detail.

05 Don Juan versus Pasha Ali

The flagships of Don Juan and Pasha Ali become hotly engaged. Ali's Sultana rams Don Juan's Real. Spanish infantrymen, or arquebusiers, pour deadly fire into the elite Ottoman Janissaries. Spanish troops board Sultana twice but are thrown back in hand-to-hand fighting. Fired from an arquebus, a lead ball kills Pasha Ali, whose head is severed from his lifeless body and placed on a pike. Terrified, the Turks in the vicinity panic.

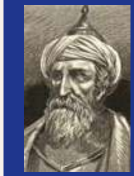
OTTOMAN TURKISH FLEET

TROOPS 31,000

SAILORS 50,000

CANNON 750

WARSHIPS 250



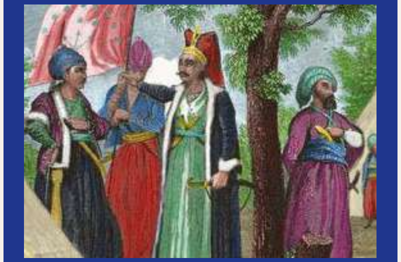
PASHA ALI MONIZINDADE

LEADER

Killed at the Battle of Lepanto, Ali Pasha also lost the 'Grand banner of the Caliphs', a treasured Islamic flag.

STRENGTHS Bold and daring, Ali Pasha was confident, inspiring his forces.

WEAKNESS Impetuous Ali Pasha, a poor tactician, lost force cohesion at Lepanto.



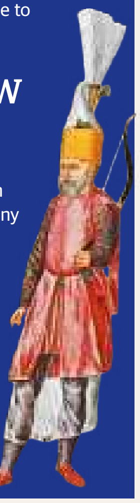
JANISSARIES

KEY UNIT

Elite infantrymen of the Ottoman Empire, the Janissaries were originally formed as the sultan's bodyguard or household troops.

STRENGTHS Willing to forfeit their lives, Janissaries were particularly effective shock troops.

WEAKNESS Early Janissaries were expert archers but were also vulnerable to enemy gunfire.



OTTOMAN BOW AND ARROW

KEY WEAPON

Although Ottoman infantrymen carried firearms at Lepanto, many archers were also present.

STRENGTHS The sturdy composite bow provided an excellent rate of fire.

WEAKNESS Lacking the lethality of arquebusiers, the archers were susceptible to gunfire.

© Alamy, Getty Images, Nicholas Forder

THE SULTANATE OF WOMEN

How the sultan's harem became the focal point of political power in the Ottoman Empire

Written by Jem Duducu

The Ottoman Empire lasted 600 years. It began at the tail end of the crusading movement in the Middle East and finished in the 1920s. This means that there are still a few people alive today who were born subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The peak of the empire began with Suleiman I, known as 'The Lawgiver' in the east and as 'The Magnificent' in the west. Intriguingly, while he was in charge of an empire in its prime and undeniably the most powerful man in Europe in the 1500s, it's during his reign that the era known as of the 'Sultanate of Women' begins, a time when the harem became the focal point of political power.

'Harem' is a Turkish word derived from the Arabic 'haram', which means forbidden or sacrosanct. It refers to the private quarters of the palace, set aside for the sultan's women, including his mother, wives (officially four), daughters and other female relatives as well as the concubines who were there purely for the sultan's pleasure. It was, quite simply, the sultan's family home. The imperial harem, of which the one in Topkapı Palace is probably the most famous example, typically housed dozens of women – at its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries, there were about 300.

The power of the Ottoman court was based on a strict hierarchy, with the sultan at the top. The Ottoman harem was also a hierarchy, with the sultan's mother, the valide sultan, the supreme ruler. Wives were next in rank and others followed according to how they played the power politics in this all female domain. Lower ranking women acted as servants to higher ranking women.

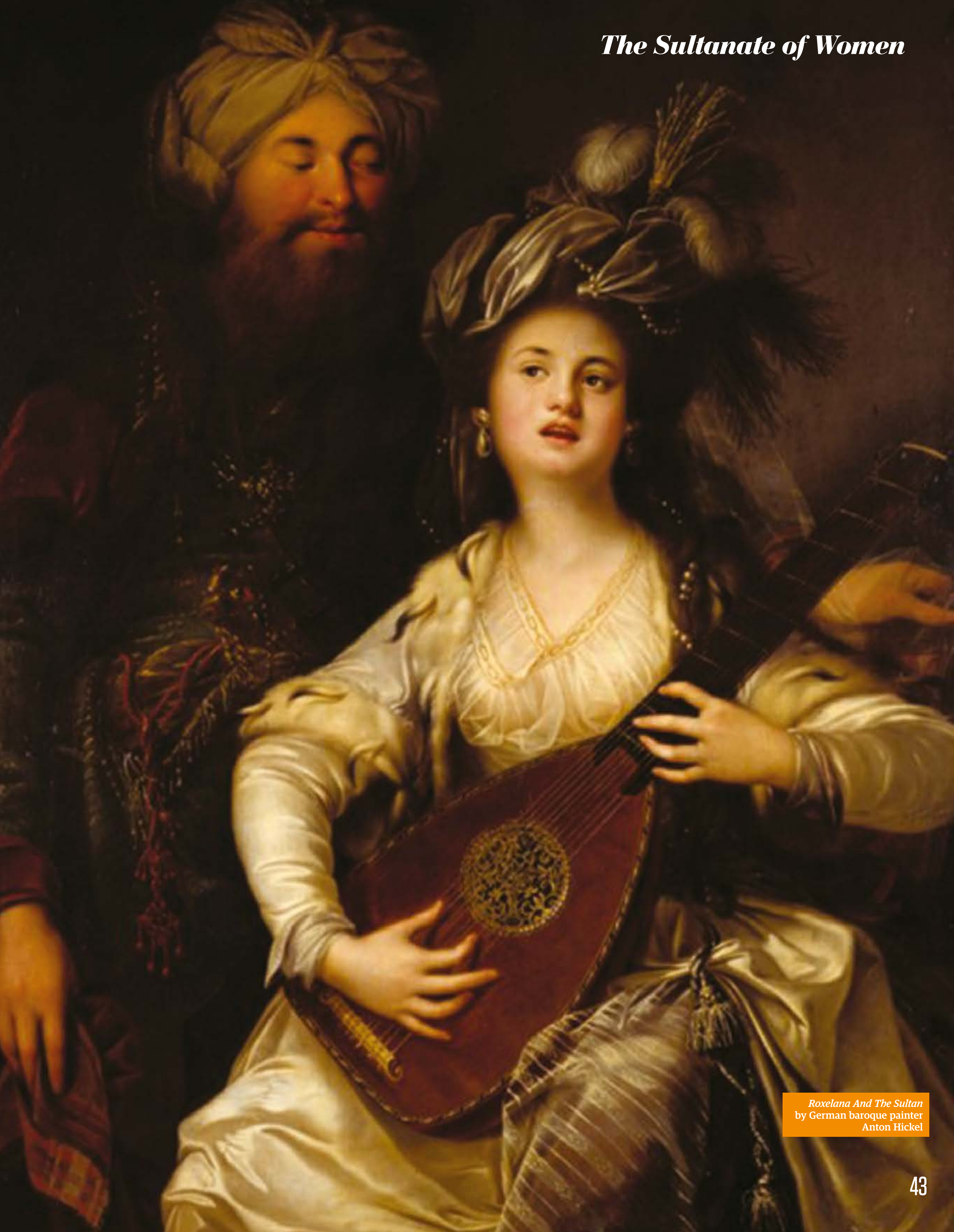
The Topkapı Palace harem is vast and labyrinthine. Walking around just the few parts of the compound that are open to the public is incredibly evocative, a place where it is easy to imagine whispered intrigues as footsteps echo through the beautifully tiled corridors. One room has a gurgling fountain, strategically located so that conversations could not be overheard. The harem would have been a lively place, with children running around, unaware that only one of the little boys would become the next sultan, to the detriment of his of brothers, who were, at times, ritually strangled on the accession of the new sultan. As such, there was constant plotting and scheming as each mother of a son vied to position him to become sultan.

Suleiman was the first sultan in over two centuries to be officially married (but he still had hundreds of concubines). His wife was formally known as Hürrem Haseki Sultan, but she was better known as Roxelana, and she was what we would today call Ukrainian. Roxelana was most likely captured by the Tartars and handed over to the Ottomans as part of their annual tribute. She was about 15 when she arrived in the imperial harem in Istanbul, a young girl in a strange land, surrounded by an unfamiliar language, religion and culture. Because of the sheer number in the harem, just being there didn't automatically mean you would ever meet the sultan, let alone catch his eye. But catch his eye she did.

When Roxelana arrived, Suleiman already had two favourites, Gülfem and Mahidevran. But Roxelana's outgoing personality and playfulness intoxicated the young sultan and, over time, she became his favourite by knocking her competitors down the pecking order. She was so favoured that she was allowed to have more than one son, breaking a centuries-old tradition. And she broke another tradition when she married Suleiman. Obviously their wedding in 1533/34 was as lavish and as opulent as it was surprising. The marriage and Roxelana's new position as chief consort set a precedent and explains why women were to hold such sway at court for the next 130 years. Roxelana's wealth and influence would have made her far more powerful than her contemporary, Queen Mary of England. This Ukrainian slave girl influenced foreign policy and affairs of state of the largest empire in Europe and the Middle East. The sultan's wife now had more power than anyone but the sultan.

It is a little known fact that many of the sultan's women did not spend their entire lives in the harem. Once a son came of age at around 16, he was sent off to govern an area of the empire… and the mother went with the son. This meant the son had an ally he could trust and it also stopped the harem from becoming a nursing home for older

> "'HAREM' IS A TURKISH WORD DERIVED FROM THE ARABIC 'HARAM', WHICH MEANS FORBIDDEN OR SACROSANCT"



Roxelana And The Sultan by German baroque painter Anton Hickel consorts. Again Roxelana bucked the trend and stayed in the royal harem to be near her husband and sons, in the thick of imperial intrigue.

Later in Suleiman's reign, Mustafa, the son of Mahidevran, rebelled. He was older than any of the chief consort's sons and, therefore, more likely to take the throne come the sultan's death, which meant he posed a real and direct threat to Roxelana's sons and her legacy.

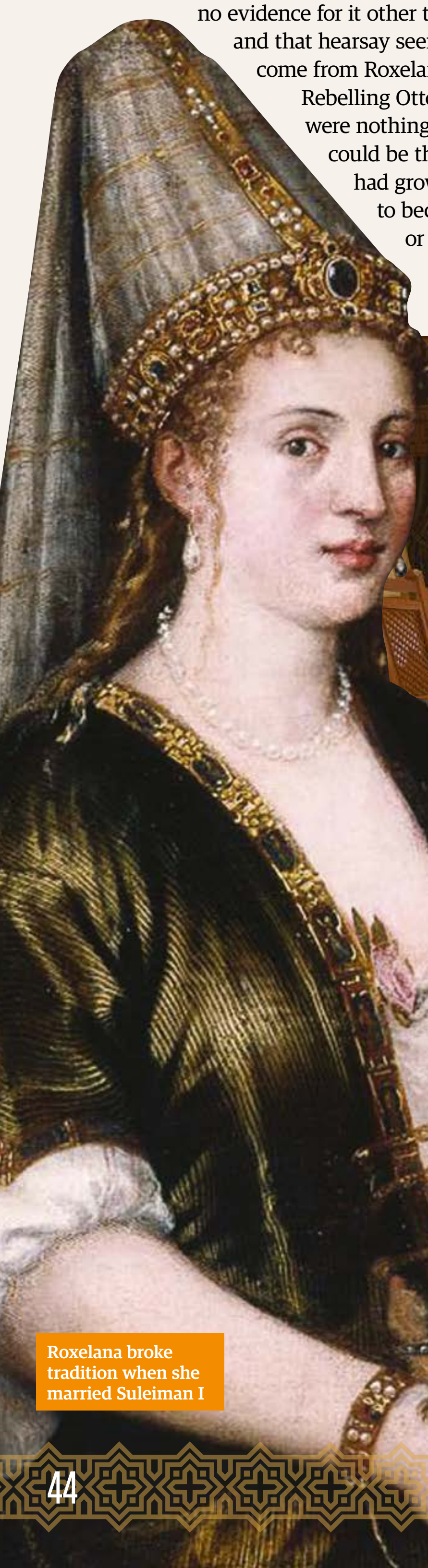
Up until his rebellion, Mustafa had been seen as capable and had even served as his father's grand vizier (prime minister) for a time. The interesting thing about this rebellion is that there seems to be no evidence for it other than hearsay, and that hearsay seems to have come from Roxelana. Rebelling Ottoman princes were nothing new, so it could be that Mustafa had grown impatient to become sultan, or it could be that the whole thing was made up by Roxelana as a means to remove the main impediment to one of her sons becoming sultan (with all that this meant for her). If the latter was the case, her scheming worked. Suleiman had Mustafa executed and Mahidevran, with no son, lost her status and became an irrelevance in the power politics of the sultanate. While it's not hard to believe that Roxelana plotted Mustafa's fall, it could also be that rumours about her involvement were spread by her enemies (she had many). However, when considering cui bono (who benefits), this turn of events would seem to have most favoured Roxelana. Her links to other high profile executions seem to have been based more on gossip than this particular one. She died in 1558 in her mid-50s and her mausoleum is adjacent to Suleiman's in Istanbul.

Fast forwarding about 50 years, we come to the other famous female figure in Ottoman politics, Kösem. This is where the Sultanate of Women becomes *Game Of Thrones* on steroids.

Sultan Ahmed became the new sultan at the age of 13 in 1603. Even at this young age he made a significant impact on Ottoman imperial protocol – he did not have his brother strangled, as was the tradition to remove any potential threats to the throne. Instead, his 11-year-old brother Mustafa was quietly tucked away in a palace, in essence, under a very luxurious house arrest. Ahmed had yet to hit puberty, so it was best for all that there was an heir and a spare. However his decision was written into law and from then on, no more little coffins would be carried out of Topkapı Palace on the accession of a new sultan.

For one so young, Ahmed had a lot on his plate. He finished a war in the west and one in the east, with no major changes in the balance of power. Ahmed knew the importance of the dynastic line and, once he reached an appropriate age, he met Kösem, a girl in the harem who was only a little older than he was. Better known to history as Kösem Sultan, she arrived in the harem at exactly the right time. Ahmed's mother and grandmother, both women of immense power and influence, would not have shared Ahmed with this new girl, but they both died relatively early in Ahmed's reign, so Kösem, having caught the sultan's eye, now had to keep it.

The Haseki Hurrem Sultan Hamam in Istanbul built in 1556 by Mimar Sinan



Roxelana broke tradition when she married Suleiman I

The imperial harem was not just a pleasure palace but the sultan's private quarters. It was where he ate, slept, read and planned imperial policy. Yes, he kept his concubines busy, but the harem was primarily his family home

Whatever she did worked spectacularly well as the year she gave birth to the boy who would later be sultan was the same year that Ahmed's other consort, Mahfiruz Hatice Sultan, was beaten by the eunuchs, a sign that Kösem Sultan remained at the top of the pecking order. She was the wife of one sultan, the mother of two more and was still around to wield power for her grandson.

Unfortunately, Sultan Ahmed caught typhus in 1617 and died from internal bleeding. He was just 27 years old and, although he had a young son, the Ottoman court feared what message a boy ruler would send out to the empire's enemies. This was a critical moment for the empire.

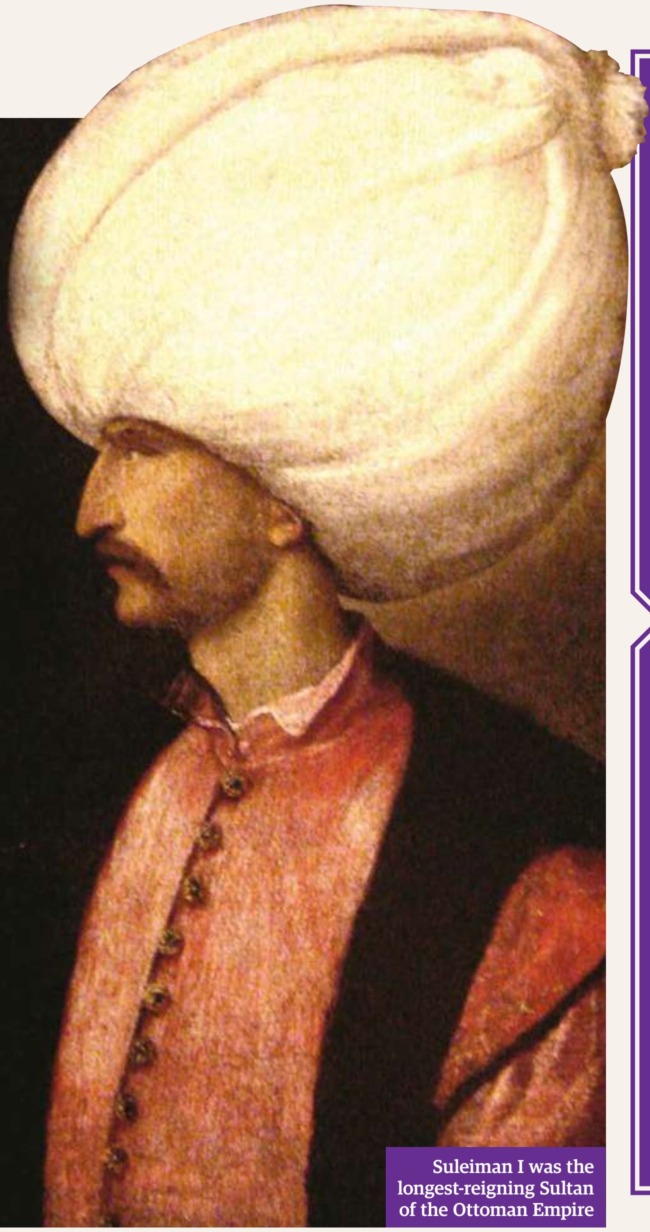
Enter Mustafa, the brother who had been tucked away since Ahmed's coronation. Mustafa may have been born with a learning or mental disability, which was not helped by years spent in the 'cage', a windowless set of rooms in the harem, where the sultan's male heirs lived out their young lives.

"SULTAN AHMED'S OTHER CONSORT, MAHFIRUZ HATICE SULTAN, WAS BEATEN BY THE EUNUCHS"

The decision to gird Mustafa with the sword of Osman (the Ottoman equivalent of being crowned) was not a popular one, and many in the court objected. With the impossible choice of a boy sultan or a mad one, the court picked the mad one. Unsurprisingly, this didn't go well and he has been remembered by history as Mustafa the Mad.

Sultan Mustafa lasted three months. He was seen at the royal arsenal, made a few public appearances, waved to the crowds a bit and then was unceremoniously dumped back in his palace. The reason was a powerful new cabal in the government, and they preferred Osman, who was Ahmed's oldest son. So, a 14 year old was the next to be girded with Osman's sword and he became Osman II.

After his father's death and a decade of scheming, there were too many vested interests to give Osman a chance. Rather than a leader in his own right, he was meant to be a figurehead under the control of the anti-Mustafa cabal. He was a teenager surrounded by hungry wolves, with no power base of his own. The Janissaries, always alert to the machinations of power politics, began to scheme while in the harem Kösem Sultan plotted. Osman II was not her son. If he were allowed to build a power base or, worse for her, to marry and announce his own

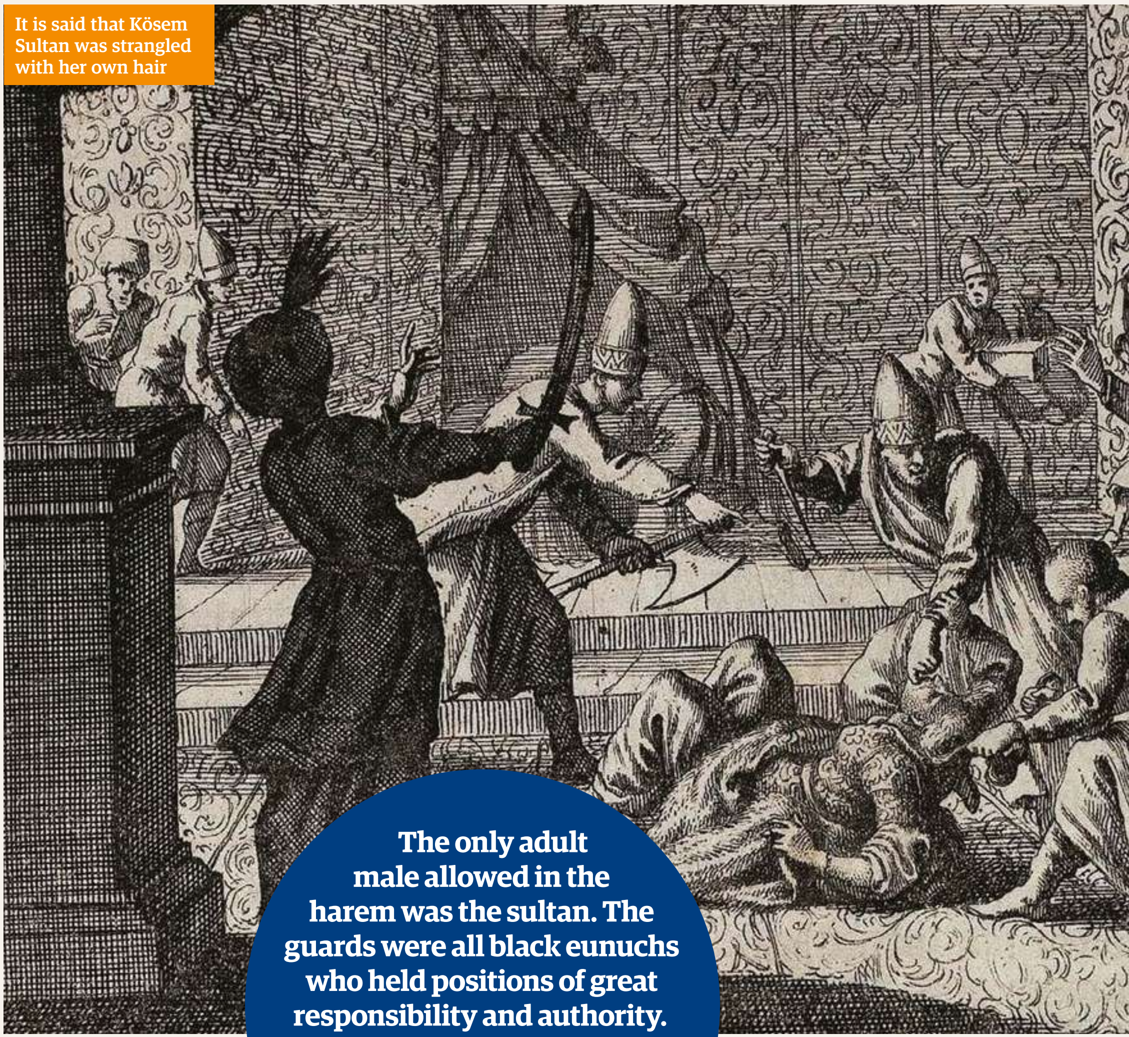


Suleiman I was the longest-reigning Sultan of the Ottoman Empire

HEARTFELT EXPRESSION

Unusually, some of the love poetry Suleiman wrote for Roxelana has survived. An example:

Throne of my lonely niche, my wealth, my love, my moonlight.
My most sincere friend, my confidant, my very existence, my sultan, my one and only love.
The most beautiful among the beautiful...
My springtime, my merry faced love, my daytime, my sweetheart, laughing leaf...
My plants, my sweet, my rose, the one only who does not distress me in this world...
My Constantinople, my Caraman, the earth of my Anatolia
My Badakhshan, my Baghdad and Khorasan
My woman of the beautiful hair, my love of the slanted brow, my love of eyes full of mischief...
I'll sing your praises always
I, lover of the tormented heart, Muhibbi of the eyes full of tears, I am happy.


It is said that Kösem Sultan was strangled with her own hair

The only adult male allowed in the harem was the sultan. The guards were all black eunuchs who held positions of great responsibility and authority. The system ensured that any children born to the women of the harem were fathered only by the sultan

Haseki Sultan, then her influence would evaporate.

Despite his early promise as a military leader and the four years he spent trying to suppress the intrigue in his own court, Osman II was finally outmanoeuvred. The Janissaries seized the sultan and imprisoned him. A short time later he was strangled and, after the assassination of the rightful ruler, Mad Mustafa was brought back to be the figurehead for the ruling elite.

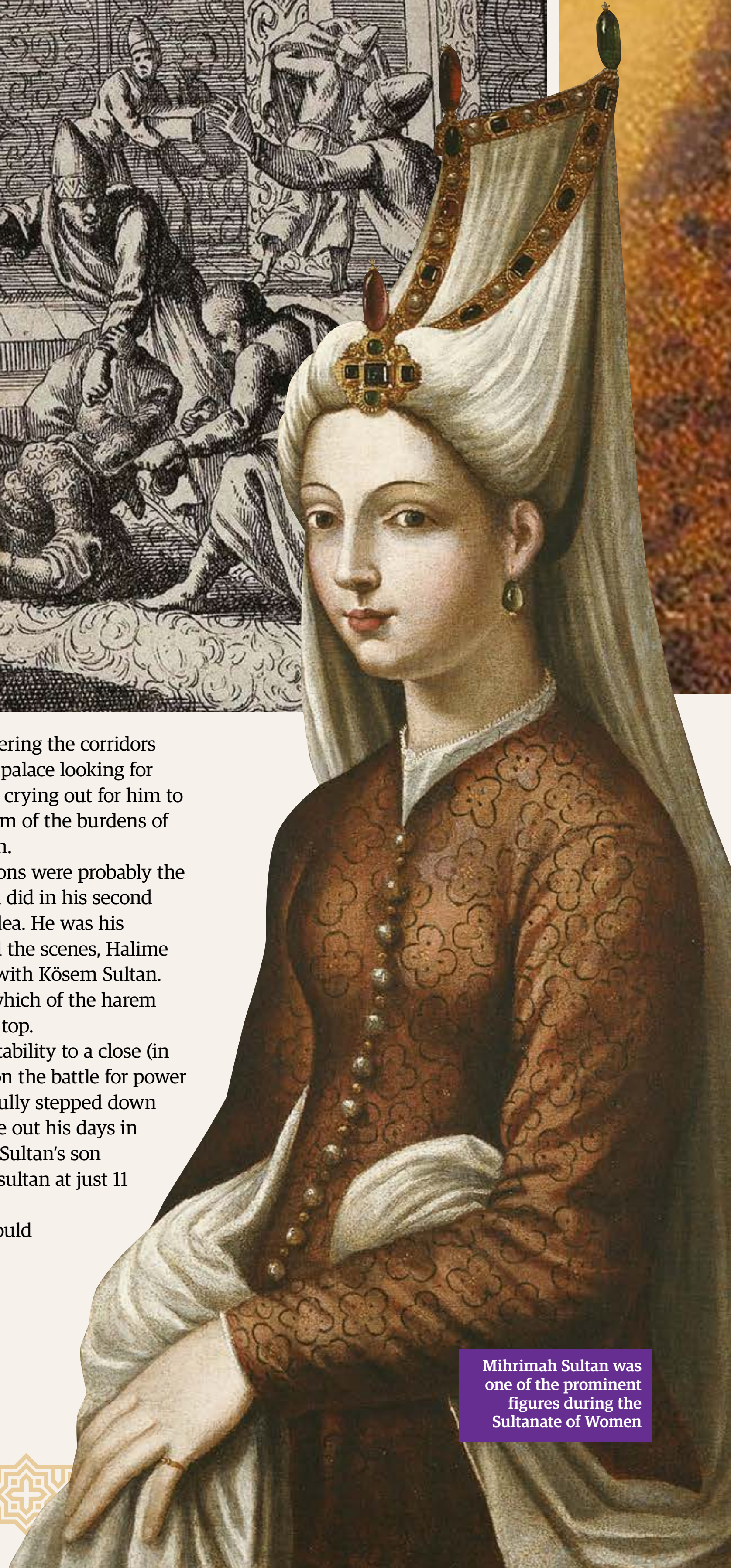
Interestingly Mustafa did not take the news of his return to power in a way that might be expected. As the heads of the various power bases conveyed the news of his nephew's death, Mustafa was clearly making mental notes, and every one of the men involved in the plot, including the grand vizier and the head of the Janissaries was executed under his orders. Later he was seen wandering the corridors of the palace looking for Osman, crying out for him to relieve him of the burdens of being sultan.

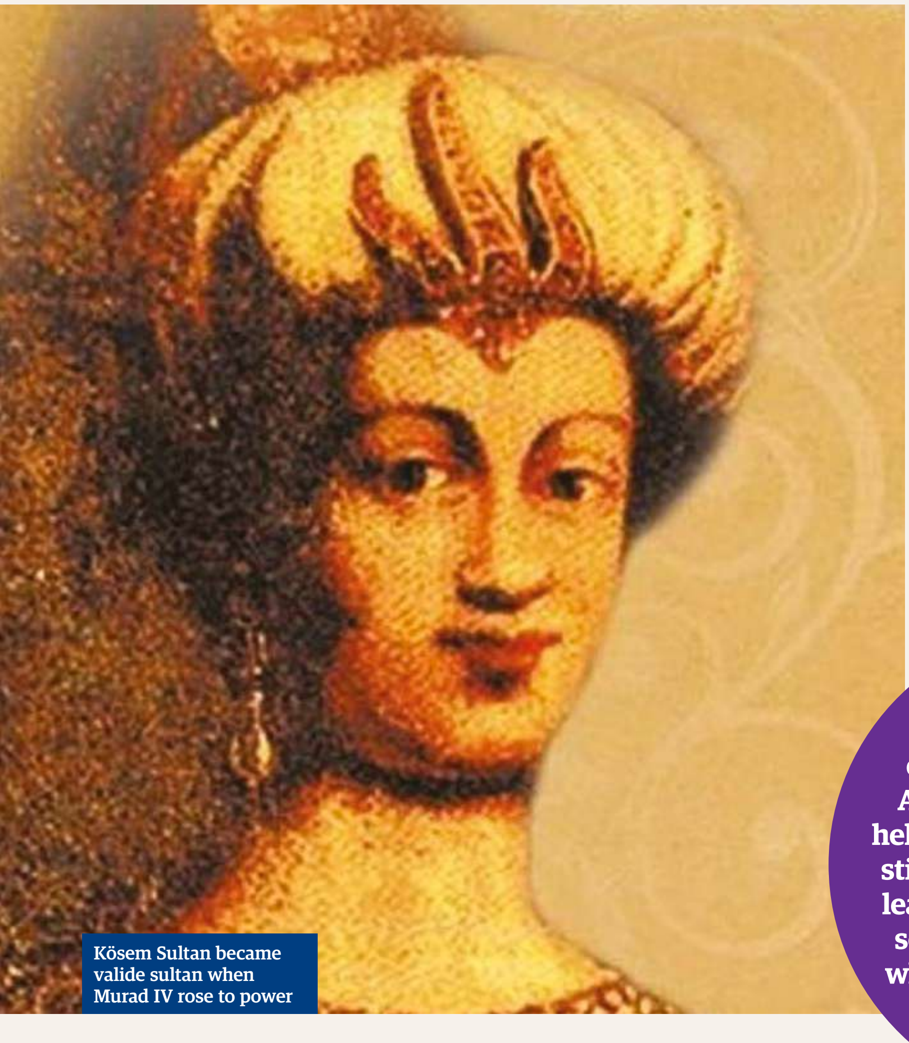
The executions were probably the only thing Mustafa did in his second reign that were his own idea. He was his mother's puppet, and behind the scenes, Halime Sultan was vying for power with Kösem Sultan. It remained to be seen just which of the harem mothers would come out on top.

Kösem Sultan brought instability to a close (in the short term) when she won the battle for power in the harem. Mustafa gratefully stepped down again and was allowed to live out his days in the old palace, while Kösem Sultan's son became by far the youngest sultan at just 11 years of age.

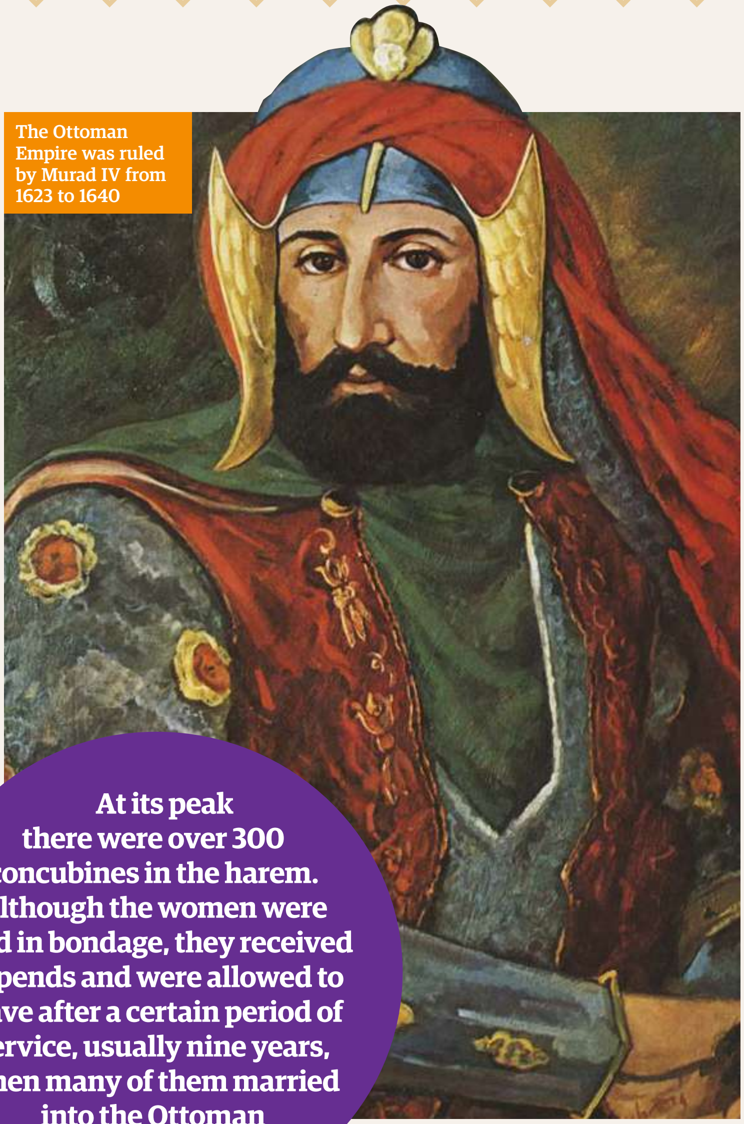
In the future, Murad IV would become one of the greatest

> "AFTER THE RIGHTFUL RULER'S ASSASSINATION, MAD MUSTAFA WAS BROUGHT BACK"


Mihrimah Sultan was one of the prominent figures during the Sultanate of Women



Kösem Sultan became valide sultan when Murad IV rose to power



The Ottoman Empire was ruled by Murad IV from 1623 to 1640

At its peak there were over 300 concubines in the harem. Although the women were held in bondage, they received stipends and were allowed to leave after a certain period of service, usually nine years, when many of them married into the Ottoman aristocracy

dichotomies in Ottoman history but, in the meantime, Kösem Sultan was regent to her sultan son. She was all too aware that as he matured, nature would take its course, and she would be superseded by her son's wife, just as she had herself had usurped her mother-in-law's power.

So it seems that Kösem Sultan came up with a cunning plan - she would ensure Murad IV was gay. While this is speculation there can be almost no other reason to have attractive male teenagers regularly paraded in front of her son. To say that her ploy affected Murad's attitude to women is something of an understatement. It seems Murad actively hated the female gender. On one occasion he ordered the personal guard on his barge to attack washer women on the shoreline. Their crime? Singing. On another occasion, he ordered all the concubines into the swimming pool where they had to tread water to stay afloat, while he fired a slingshot at any woman who tried to get out. Some of them drowned.

Murad IV died of cirrhosis of the liver in 1640, aged just 28. All of his hard work to bring stability was undone. Murad IV had come to power after a mad predecessor and now, once again, power was back in the hands of a madman. Murad IV's brother and the son of Kösem Sultan, Ibrahim, had lived his entire life in the cage. Such a strict confinement was likely to drive anyone mad, but mad or not, Ibrahim had the strongest claim to the throne (It was vital to the Ottomans that the empire was always ruled by an heir to the first Osman). Unfortunately, he thought the ceremony of his accession was an elaborate hoax on the part of his dead brother, and he resisted being girded with Osman's sword and belt. To be fair to Ibrahim, Murad IV had killed men for far less, but Ibrahim couldn't believe he was sultan until he was allowed to see Murad IV's body.

Kösem Sultan was in a bind. While she had always struggled to put her own power before the health of the empire, there was no doubt that heirs to the throne were becoming thin on the ground. While she did not want to lose out to a younger woman, she had to make sure that Ibrahim had children. Ironically, Ibrahim sired three sultans, a record number. This is probably unsurprising given that he spent most of his time in the harem which was the only home he had ever known.

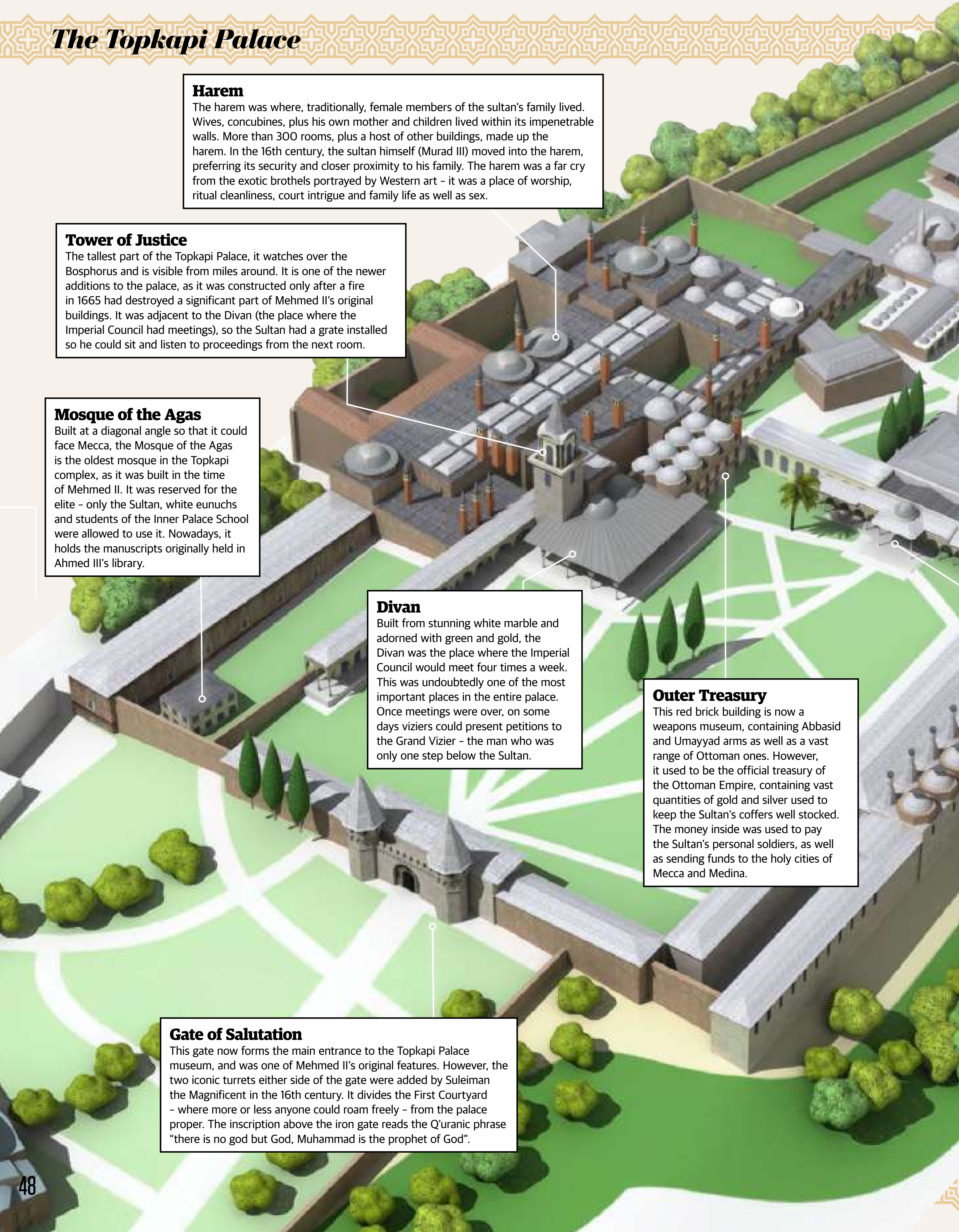
In 1647 Kösem Sultan, as well as the grand vizier, began plotting Ibrahim's overthrow. Unfortunately for them, he got wind of the palace coup and acted first. The grand vizier was executed and Kösem Sultan was banished from the capital, but these moves only slowed the wheels of revolt. Once again the Janissaries rose up, and this time they were supported by the general population. Everyone had had enough. While Ibrahim was living lavishly, the price of food and other goods was constantly rising for the public.

With turmoil at the top once more, Kösem Sultan was brought back to work out what to do. Ibrahim's reign was now untenable, but a successor had to be chosen before an uprising turned into a revolution - or even civil war. The new grand vizier and Kösem Sultan agreed that the best plan of action was to have Ibrahim executed and install his six-year-old son Mehmed as the new sultan.

Mehmed IV's reign brought an end to Kösem Sultan's power. She was not a blood relative and his mother Turhan feared the scheming woman might well make a move against the boy sultan. While it is thought that this was unlikely, it didn't prevent her execution in 1651 (there is no proof, but it was believed to have been ordered by Turhan), when it is said that she was strangled with her own hair. Her execution was a bold move and her death brought to a close the many decades of influence she and her predecessors had wielded both in the harem and the sultan's court.

© Getty Images

The Topkapi Palace



Harem
The harem was where, traditionally, female members of the sultan's family lived. Wives, concubines, plus his own mother and children lived within its impenetrable walls. More than 300 rooms, plus a host of other buildings, made up the harem. In the 16th century, the sultan himself (Murad III) moved into the harem, preferring its security and closer proximity to his family. The harem was a far cry from the exotic brothels portrayed by Western art – it was a place of worship, ritual cleanliness, court intrigue and family life as well as sex.

Tower of Justice
The tallest part of the Topkapi Palace, it watches over the Bosphorus and is visible from miles around. It is one of the newer additions to the palace, as it was constructed only after a fire in 1665 had destroyed a significant part of Mehmed II's original buildings. It was adjacent to the Divan (the place where the Imperial Council had meetings), so the Sultan had a grate installed so he could sit and listen to proceedings from the next room.

Mosque of the Agas
Built at a diagonal angle so that it could face Mecca, the Mosque of the Agas is the oldest mosque in the Topkapi complex, as it was built in the time of Mehmed II. It was reserved for the elite – only the Sultan, white eunuchs and students of the Inner Palace School were allowed to use it. Nowadays, it holds the manuscripts originally held in Ahmed III's library.

Divan
Built from stunning white marble and adorned with green and gold, the Divan was the place where the Imperial Council would meet four times a week. This was undoubtedly one of the most important places in the entire palace. Once meetings were over, on some days viziers could present petitions to the Grand Vizier – the man who was only one step below the Sultan.

Outer Treasury
This red brick building is now a weapons museum, containing Abbasid and Umayyad arms as well as a vast range of Ottoman ones. However, it used to be the official treasury of the Ottoman Empire, containing vast quantities of gold and silver used to keep the Sultan's coffers well stocked. The money inside was used to pay the Sultan's personal soldiers, as well as sending funds to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Gate of Salutation
This gate now forms the main entrance to the Topkapi Palace museum, and was one of Mehmed II's original features. However, the two iconic turrets either side of the gate were added by Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century. It divides the First Courtyard – where more or less anyone could roam freely – from the palace proper. The inscription above the iron gate reads the Q'uranic phrase "there is no god but God, Muhammad is the prophet of God".

THE TOPKAPI PALACE

Istanbul, Turkey, 1460-1478

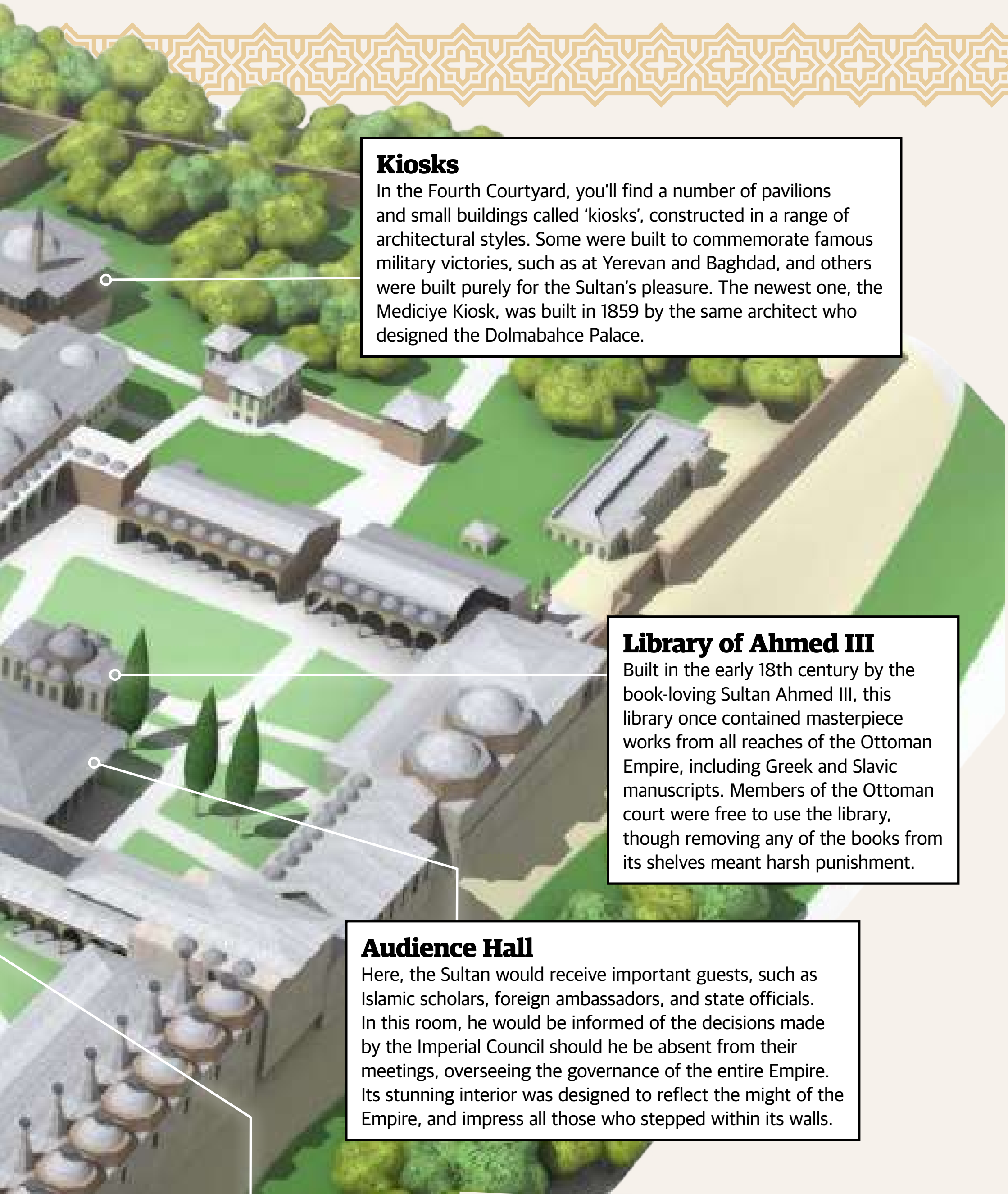
In almost 400 years of its history, Istanbul's iconic Topkapi Palace grew so important that it eventually operated as a city within a city, housing thousands at a time. But it wasn't just the Sultan's opulent residence - it was the heart of Ottoman society, acting as its high-security administrative centre, royal court, and even an entertainment venue.

The Topkapi Palace sits pride of place at the top of a hill overlooking the Bosphorus, Golden Horn, and Sea of Marmara. The site was strategically important, and in the days of Byzantium was used as Constantinople's very own Acropolis. When the Ottoman Turks conquered the city in 1453, they destroyed much of it - but new ruler Mehmed II recognised the site's potential.

He designed and constructed the Topkapi Palace according to his unique vision. The palace featured four courtyards, each serving a different function. However, Mehmed II himself only lived there for three years, as he died in 1481. His successors made their own tweaks, resulting in a vast range of architectural styles within its walls.

Any unarmed Ottoman citizen was permitted to enter the First Courtyard, allowing a thriving trade to spring up within the palace grounds. The Second Courtyard was where governmental business took place. The Third and Fourth courtyards were the most secretive, and encompassed the Sultan's private quarters. Inside the complex, you'd find mosques, government buildings, libraries, living space and vast collections of armour, weapons, jewellery and pottery.

But while the teeming Topkapi remained crucial to the Ottoman capital for hundreds of years, the Empire's needs eventually outgrew the Topkapi's capacity. In 1856, the Sultan moved himself and his government to the newer Dolmabahçe palace, leaving the Topkapi with only a few functions. However, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, it has found a new lease of life as a museum, receiving over 3 million visitors per year.



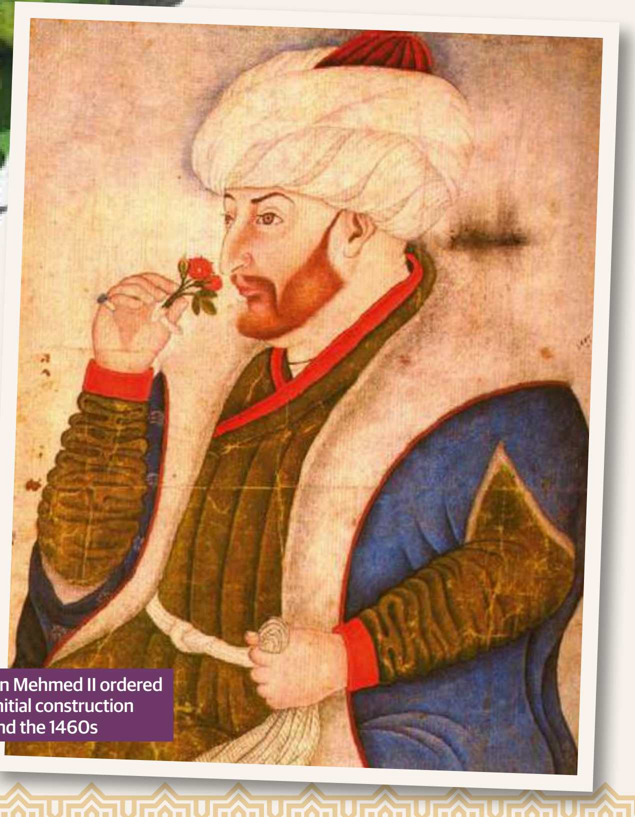
Kiosks
In the Fourth Courtyard, you'll find a number of pavilions and small buildings called 'kiosks', constructed in a range of architectural styles. Some were built to commemorate famous military victories, such as at Yerevan and Baghdad, and others were built purely for the Sultan's pleasure. The newest one, the Mediciye Kiosk, was built in 1859 by the same architect who designed the Dolmabahce Palace.

Library of Ahmed III
Built in the early 18th century by the book-loving Sultan Ahmed III, this library once contained masterpiece works from all reaches of the Ottoman Empire, including Greek and Slavic manuscripts. Members of the Ottoman court were free to use the library, though removing any of the books from its shelves meant harsh punishment.

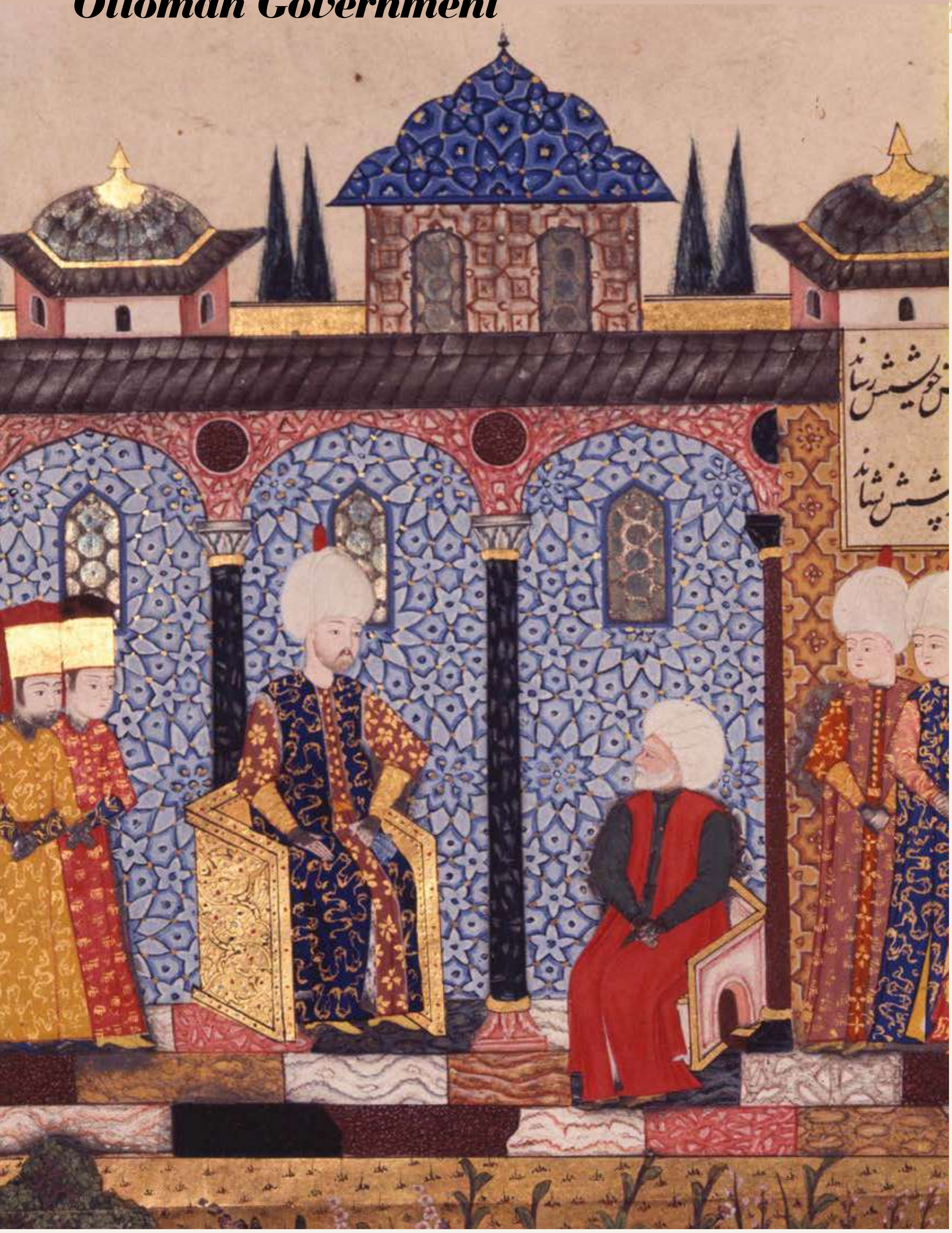
Audience Hall
Here, the Sultan would receive important guests, such as Islamic scholars, foreign ambassadors, and state officials. In this room, he would be informed of the decisions made by the Imperial Council should he be absent from their meetings, overseeing the governance of the entire Empire. Its stunning interior was designed to reflect the might of the Empire, and impress all those who stepped within its walls.

Gate of Felicity
The Gate of Felicity served as the main entryway to the Sultan's private residence, where he would retreat to at the end of a long and hard day's work. As well as serving this purpose, it also had a ceremonial role, and could be used as a place to pay homage to the Sultan. During enthronement ceremonies, the Ottoman throne would be symbolically put in front of the gate. The throne would also be placed there when discontent in the Empire was brewing, as the Sultan would receive his loyal Janissaries within the confines of the Second Courtyard.

© Adrian Mann



Sultan Mehmed II ordered the initial construction around the 1460s



OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT

How the Ottomans ruled on high over an empire of millions – and kept the peace despite deep-seated divides

Written by Marwan Kamel

In 1300, Anatolia was on fire. After the Mongols had laid waste to the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum, its vassal states were a shattered patchwork of independent beyliks scattered across Anatolia. In its northwest corner, bordering the withering Byzantine Empire, the House of Uthman (Osman) arose. Suleyman Shah came to Anatolia with an estimated force of 5,000 men, but eventually the Ottomans would subdue all their rivals, surpass their boundaries and lay the framework for an empire that would last for centuries. It was from the experience of the Seljuqs and their experience in this chaotic Anatolia that the Ottomans learned statecraft and would come to model their government. Over time, they adapted, grew and evolved their structure to fit their time, and this flexibility gave them great staying power.

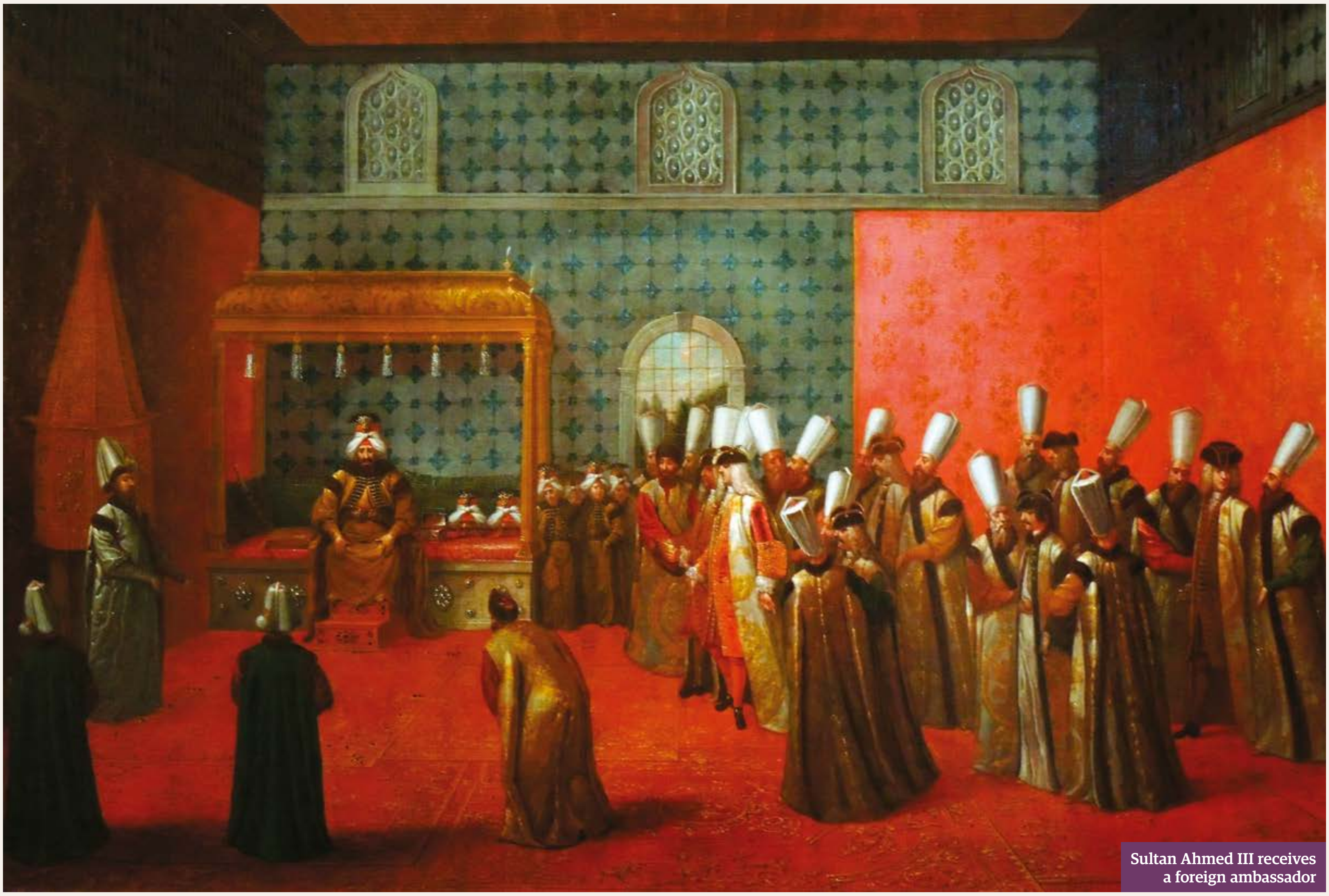
The Ottomans often left local authority structures intact, but made them vassals of the sultan. As a result, a sort of 'federate' Eyalet adminstrative system arose. The Eyalet was then further subdivided into Sanjaks and directly appointed Mutasarrifate, then into a Kaza or Kadiluk, then into Nahiya, then into municipalities.

For example, in 1516, when the Ottomans defeated the Mamluk forces at the Battle of Marj Dabiq near Aleppo – eventually finishing them off by 1517, they inherited the Mamluk subdivisions of the Near East and Egypt. The 'mamlakat' were eventually combined together into Eyalet, and former Mamluk administrators who switched allegiances even became the new Ottoman Beylerbey, such as the Circassian Jandbirdi Al-Ghazali, who would become the Damascus Eyalet's first governor.

This power structure was sometimes a double-edged sword. Elsewhere, such as in the Eyalets of North Africa or in places like the Khanate of Crimea, vassal states could be essentially independent but under the suzerainty of the Sublime Porte. The Barbary States, whose pirates preyed upon European ships in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, were only nominally under Ottoman control, and often acted independent of centralised power. In Egypt, following the withdrawal of Napoleon's forces from Egypt, for example, Muhammad Ali Pasha was able to seize power for himself, eventually challenging the sultan's army itself and taking the Levant. But, despite rebellion at periods, the structure also allowed for more breathing room to absorb losses and make concessions while still maintaining control.

As the Empire expanded, it needed to account not only for a diversification of administrative structures, but also legal ones. As more and more non-Muslims became subjects of the Empire, the millet system emerged. In this system, each millet governed itself according to its own autonomous confessional legal system, be it Mosaic, Canonic or Sharia.

However, all power in the Ottoman Empire ultimately emanated from the sultan, radiating



Sultan Ahmed III receives a foreign ambassador

"The sultan could oversee the political discussions, out of sight, watching and listening carefully"

outwards through his imperial household, then to the Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn (imperial council), then into lower-ranking authorities.

The House of Osman consisted of the sultan, the Imperial Harem and the Enderûn (palace schools). Led by the Grand Vizier, whose function was similar to that of a modern Prime Minister, the Dîvân discussed politics. Their power was mostly consultative, as the Grand Vizier and then the sultan had the ultimate say. As they discussed, though, the sultan could still, quite literally, oversee – albeit out of sight. He could, if he wished, watch and listen in carefully from a golden grille in the chamber's wall. The Grand Vizier's power was second only to the sultan's and he reported directly to him. In turn, the sultan could make his wishes known to the council through the Kapi Agha. Ultimately, all decisions were made in the sultan's name, but as records are scant, it is unclear how much of them were made with or without his override or input.

The Viziers were a great example of social mobility. They often began their careers in the military and then worked their way up the ranks, elevated gradually by the nobles and the sultan. The majority were of non-Turkish origin, and they often began their careers as mercenaries or slave soldiers in the Janissaries – 30 of them were Albanian alone. And, like Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who served as Grand Vizier for 14 years under three sultans, they could even become the most powerful person.

There were Viziers of all sorts, and they were intermediaries between the various local Pashas and Aghas and the Council. One of these Pashas was the Bostanci Bashi (modern Turkish: bostancıbaşı) – literally 'chief gardener', and also the chief executioner, responsible for weeding the garden that was the Empire.

The Enderûn sorted people into a hierarchy of the state and military. This system of schools enculturated tributes; another group prepared Janissaries; the Palace School trained the upper echelons to become scientists, teachers and administrators; and finally, the Viziers oversaw it all. It was possible, through demonstrations of talent and intelligence, to move upwards through this structure as well.

Mobility sometimes discouraged loyalty. It was possible to act completely in self-interest. In the final days of the Empire, the Young Turks (a political reform movement) levelled these suspicions on any non-Turks. Nonetheless, in his 'Turkish Letters' from the 16th century, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, the Flemish ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to the Ottomans, describes the contrast between two Viziers:

"…there was a striking contrast between the characters of the Pashas Ali and Roostem. The career of the former had been such as to place his integrity in money matters above all… he was under no apprehension that courtesy or kindness on his part would injure him with his master. But Roostem, on the contrary, was always grasping… and one who made self-interest and money his first consideration…"

Finally, on a local level, the general populace would have a local Pasha and Qadi to interact with. Through them, justice and law was administrated on a smaller scale and acted as the representative of those above them. And, of course, the tax collector would eventually come around.

Empires can be won by conquest, but their day-to-day workings are fuelled by money. Sitting at the western end of the Silk Road, on the nexus of Eurasia and Africa, and controlling the majority of the Mediterranean, the Ottomans made good on their geographic blessings to become prolific traders, and hauled in all sorts of taxes from all over the Empire.

All land and property ownership was registered in the defter (from Arabic دفتر meaning 'notebook' or 'registry'). The records in this book accounted for not only the property, but also the households, villages, and population by religion and sometimes ethnicity. Prior to the first Ottoman census after Tanzimat, this is often the only reliable information modern historians have for genealogy or microsociological research.

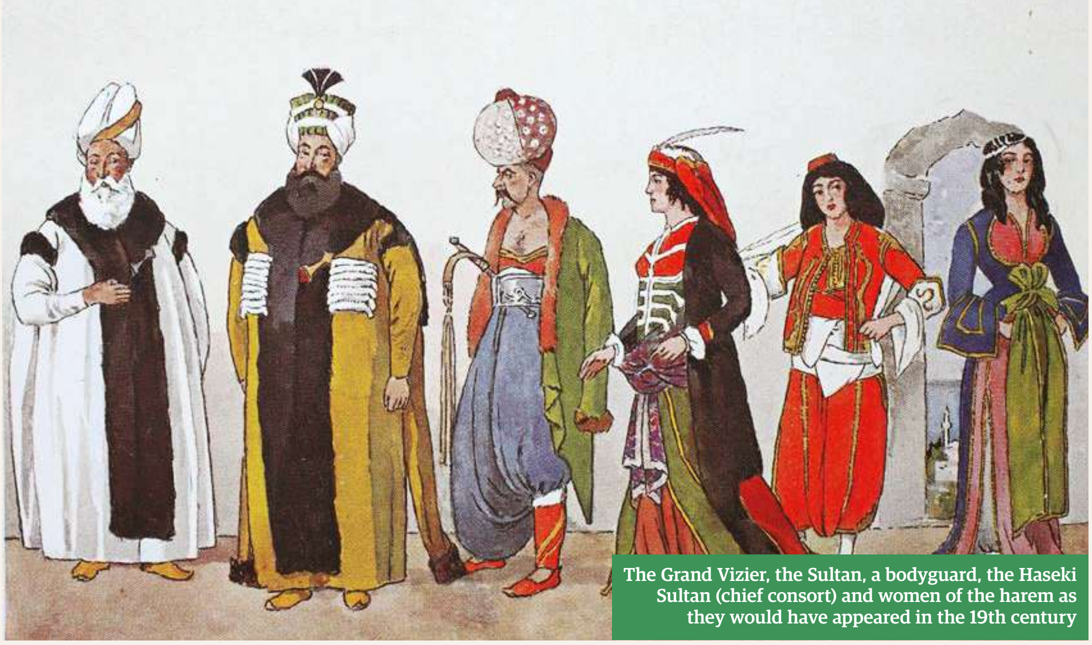
Like the administrative divisions, the Ottomans used a patchwork of systems inherited from other entities to collect taxes. But in the early Empire, newly conquered lands were divided almost as a type of war booty amongst members of the military class in the 'timar'. Contingent upon military service, the Sultan distributed timars in lieu of pay, which relieved pressure on the Ottoman treasury. In order to estimate the value of a new land, surveyors were sent and its potential value was estimated. In this semi-feudal system, the timar owners had the right to collect taxes and enforce laws amongst its inhabitants. By the 17th century, however, it fell out of favour and timars reentered the Ottoman treasury as payment for exemption from military service.

In some areas, like Mesopotamia, a certain percentage of agricultural output was taxed. Non-Muslim millets, in addition to jizya, collected their own taxes based either on religious laws or even pre-existing tax systems like in Serbia. Muslims often paid mandatory zakat. War saw additional taxes levied. Certain goods like salt or wine were taxed separately. Nonetheless, the burden could sometimes be very heavy and local lords collected, but people looked for ways out.

Often, taxes were graduated depending on a community's ability to pay. Waqfs (trusts) were tax exempt and used by some as a loophole to avoid taxes and could gain a lot of political power and even develop their own social services.

However, changes in government really began with the Tulip Period. This period was named after a correspondence with a tulip craze in the early 17th-century Ottoman Empire, which initiated prolonged trading contact with post-Enlightenment Europe. Grand Vizier Damad Ibrahim Pasha sent diplomatic and exploratory missions to Europe and had them report back. At the same time, the consumerist craze of the Tulip Period was indicative of a flowering in the arts, but also decadent socialising of the elite. The elite showed off with Western-influenced goods and the reports suggested making Western-influenced reforms, particularly militarily.

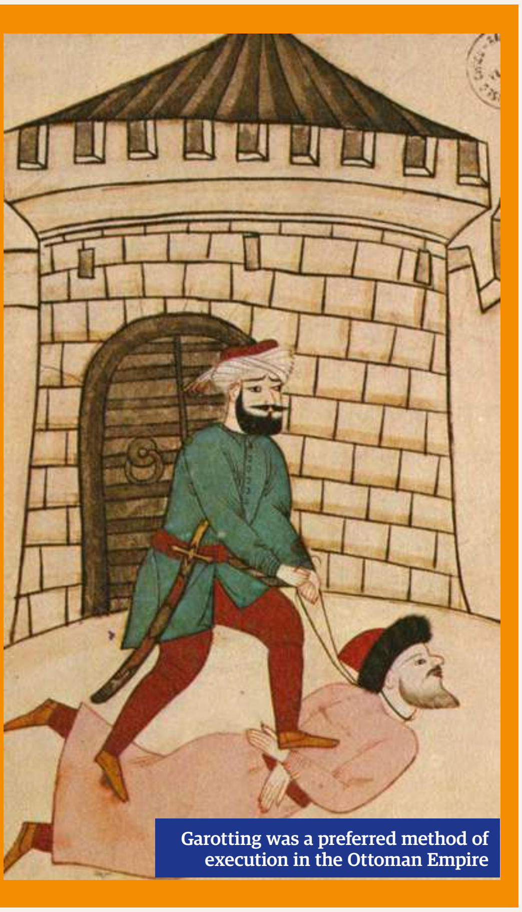
The first Ottoman printing press exemplifies a reconsideration towards foreign ideas. Although the idea of printing had existed in the Near East prior to Gutenberg (who introduced the press to Europe) since at least the Fatimid Era, it was not used for the same revolutionary purposes of dissemination of information, and had largely been banned under Bayezid II in the 15th century. During the Tulip Period, the position was reconsidered and the first moveable-type Ottoman press was started by Hungarian Ibrahim Muteferrika in 1729. Major works began to be translated from Arabic and Persian to Turkish. As libraries opened to the public and Istanbul got its first fire brigade, on a microcosmic level in Istanbul, life seemed to improve for average citizens.

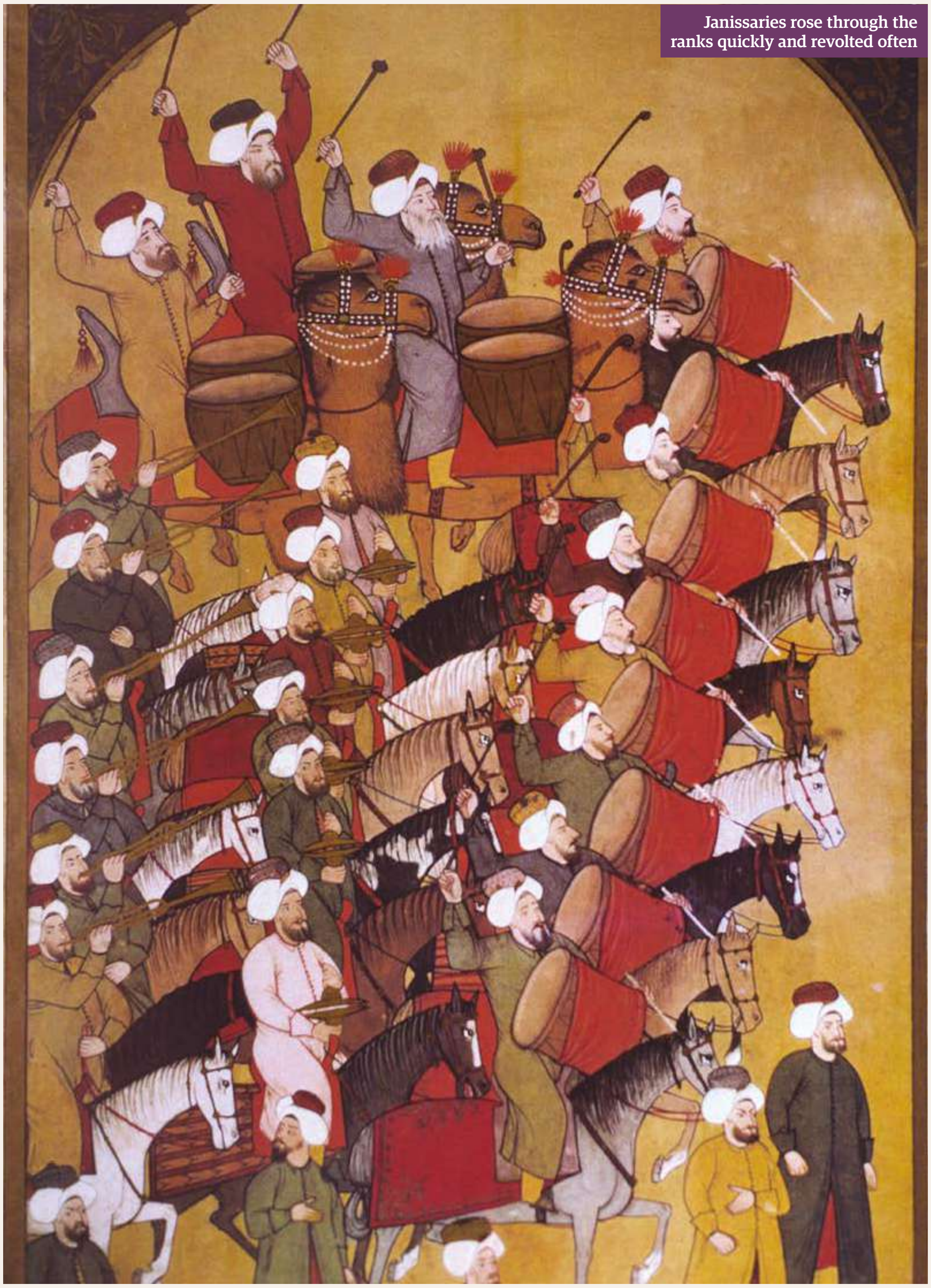

The Grand Vizier, the Sultan, a bodyguard, the Haseki Sultan (chief consort) and women of the harem as they would have appeared in the 19th century

SILKEN FRATRICIDE

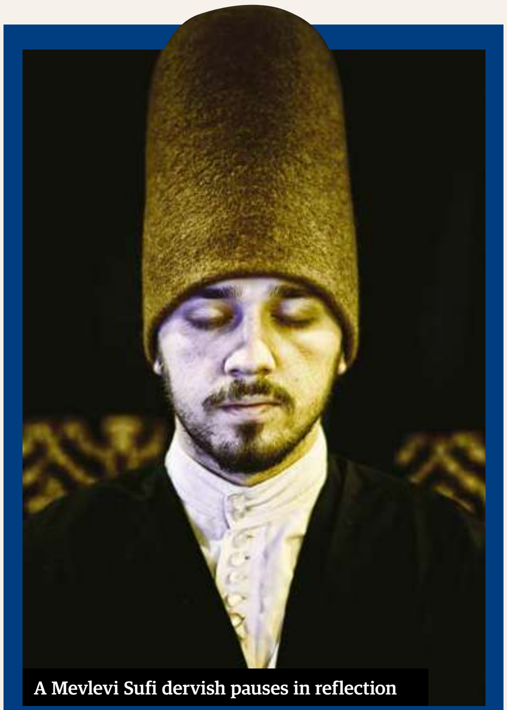
An extreme solution to sibling rivalry

Many of us have had the inevitable squabble with our sibling over toys, but what if those toys were the lands and riches of Empire? During the Interregnum period, upon his death, at least five of Bayezid I's eight sons fought a protracted civil war to lay claim to the throne of the Sultan – temporarily dividing up his territories amongst themselves. Mehmed I emerged as the victor and, as a result, he vowed that it would never happen again. Extending for about 150 years from his rule, only the proclaimed heir was kept alive. The rest were invited to dinner and quietly strangled with a silk handkerchief. The practice claimed a lot of lives – including all 19 of Mehmed III's siblings. Fratricide ended during the Sultanate of Women period with the ascension of Ahmed I at the age of 13 in 1603, as he had not yet demonstrated the ability to produce heirs. Immediately following his reign, the decision was tested as Deli Mustafa ('Mad' Mustafa) ascended the throne, but was later deposed and replaced by his brother Osman II. Notably, Osman II avoided the silk of fratricide but was instead executed by having his testicles crushed (although he may have been strangled as well). Again, Deli Mustafa took the throne, but managed to escape execution upon being deposed when his mother, Halime Sultan, stepped in to stop it. Needless to say, over the span of this practice, many potential Ottoman rulers got to experience the world's worst blind dinner date.


Garotting was a preferred method of execution in the Ottoman Empire



Janissaries rose through the ranks quickly and revolted often



A Mevlevi Sufi dervish pauses in reflection

SUFI ORDERS

The invisible hand of power

As the custodian of the Haramayn (Mecca and Medina), the Ottoman sultans could officially claim the title of Caliph for themselves. This was more of a matter of state power than spiritual, though. Behind the scenes, the mystical Sufi turuq (plural of tariqa or 'path') held immense power. They were the core that heated the outer core of temporal power from within. The Janissaries were associated with the Bektashis. Sultan Selim III was a lover of music, a composer, and a dervish of the Mevlevi (the 'Whirling Dervishes'). Others were members of the Naqshbandi, Qadiri or a slew of other orders. In this seemingly paradoxical situation, you could find a sultan above everyone in State power, but ranking below, perhaps, a simple labourer in the spiritual realm. This eventually led to modern conspiracy theorists accusing the Bektashis of being behind the Masonic Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Aside from outlandishly cartoonish Orientalist fezzes, a smattering of Arabic words, and being a secretive society, there's nothing to really suggest this was true, but they may have served as an inspiration. Nonetheless, because of the orders' associations of power in the Empire, after Ataturk's revolution in the formation of the Republic, the turuq were banned and ceased operating in the open.

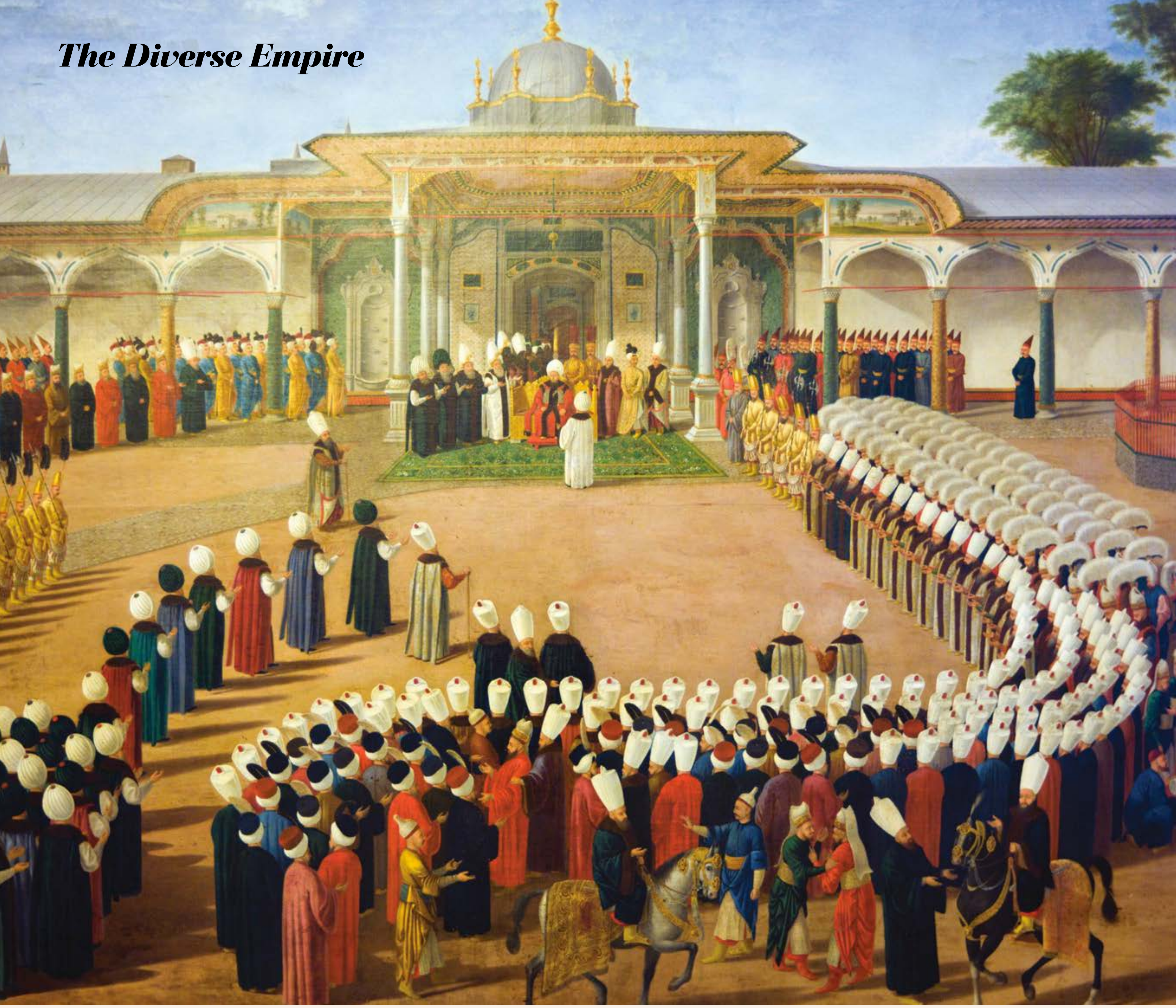
> "THE EDICT OF GÜLHANE IN 1839 DECLARED EQUALITY OF MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS"

But the contradictions of the state of the Empire surfaced. As extravagant social life emerged in Istanbul, the sultan's power weakened via inefficient tax systems and a bloated, self-interested military. The further a province was from Istanbul, the weaker the power of the Ottoman state.

The Janissary revolt of Patrona Halil in 1730 brought the Age to an end, and pushback began. After a disastrous war against Russia in the late 18th century, Selim III initiated reforms, but most importantly temporarily reformed the army into the Nizam-i cedid (New Order) troops trained in a European manner. Again, the Janissaries revolted and deposed him, but their gains were temporary, because by 1826 they were forcibly disbanded.

The Tanzimat period arose following the Edict of Gülhane in 1839, which declared equality of Muslims and non-Muslims before the law. Gülhane – in the proud tradition of naming everything after flowers – was the name of the sultan's rose garden, and was meant to allude to the end of tax farming. With the reformation came a slew of new civil liberties and rights, but also a more constitutional monarchy government that attempted to mould a state more in line with those contemporary in the West. The empire became a constitutional monarchy with a General Assembly and a Parliament. It was a structure that was a long time coming.

In the end, the brilliance of the Empire was its ability to adapt and evolve itself to changing eras, but it was eventually overcome by the inertia of its own problems that lay brewing underneath.



THE DIVERSE EMPIRE

The terms ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Turkish’ are used interchangeably nowadays, but the Ottoman Empire was a cultural melting pot, not just for Turks

Written by Marwan Kamel

For purposes of modern nationalist ideologies, it is tempting to think of the Ottoman Empire as an Empire in which a patchwork of diverse peoples were held down as subjects by Turkish overlords, but this is not its reality. Even the upper echelons of Ottoman society, all the way up to the House of Osman at the top, was diverse.

Intercommunal harmony derived from the willingness of the Empire to quite happily delegate power, giving it flexibility. As it expanded, it came across an increasing number of non-Muslim subjects. But over time, the nature of this adaptation changed. The Empire expanded and, with it, more non-Muslim minorities were included.

As these religious minorities were deemed 'dhimmi' communities and therefore had the protection of the state, they paid a separate 'jizya' tax. Officially under Sharia, People of the Book (Ahl al Kitab) like Christians, Jews, Mandeans, Zoroastrians etc were supposed to be exempt from military service, but had to pay the jizya instead. Additionally, in the Ottoman Empire this could be manifested as a tax on alcohol. However, the system sometimes resulted in tax farming.

Even though they paid an additional tax, in exchange, the millet legal system allowed each community to exercise some autonomy.

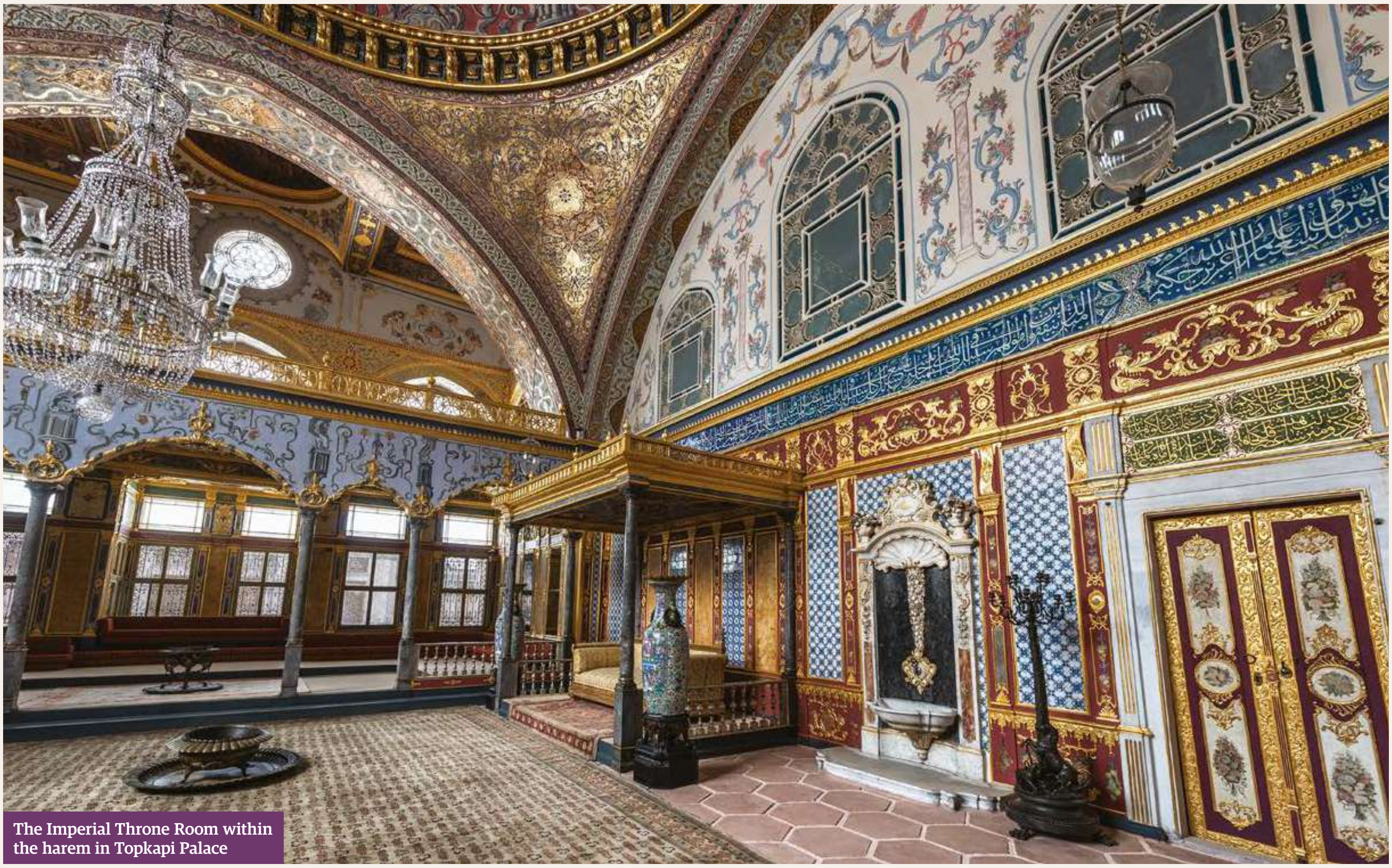
The millet system was a confessional legal system in which each religious community was subject to its own set of laws. For example, Mount Athos oversaw the legal matters of the Orthodox church, Rabbinical councils did the same for Jews, and Sharia applied to Muslims, amongst others.

Because the millet system emphasised a religious affiliation above an ethnic origin, certain groups dominated their respective millet and left out other groups within it. All Eastern Orthodox Christians, for example, which included Greeks, Serbians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Georgians, Arameans, Arabs and others, were part of the Rum (Roman or Byzantine) millet. But as Greeks were the former rulers of the Byzantine Empire, they held more clout in the clergy. As such, they came to also dominate Rum millet. Although individual ethnic identities were still preserved, with the exception of Armenian millet, they were secondary to religion in the millet.

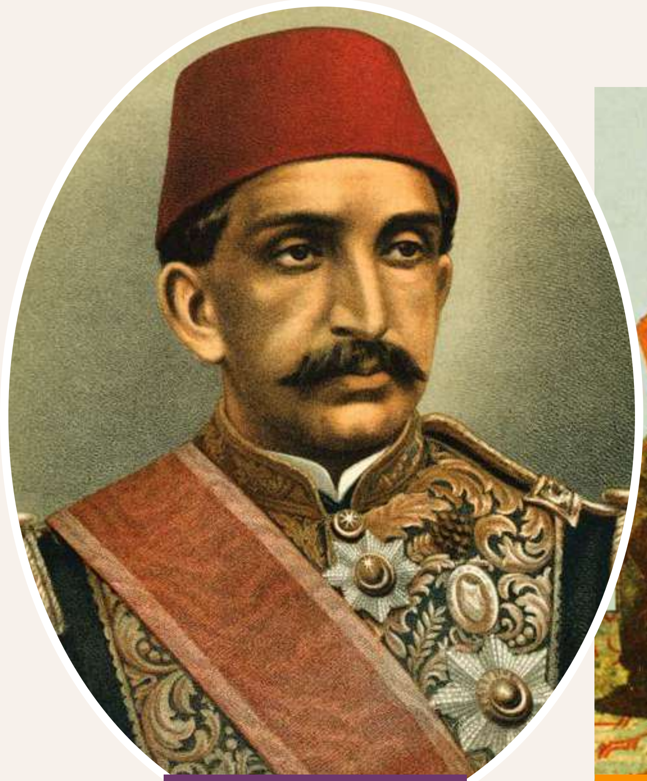
A 1912 postcard featuring the Kizlar Agha during Abdul Hamid II's reign

> "The state held considerable sway over the raising of children, creating allegiance to the Sultan"

The autonomy of the different millets also allowed some groups to have privileges inaccessible to others, which meant that those groups came to dominate certain professions. In 1493, the first moveable-type printing press came to Constantinople with Jews exiled from Spain. As an entire industry of professional scribes had copied books for centuries, Sultan Bayezid II banned printing at the behest of their outcries. They claimed that the technology would destroy the beauty and subtlety of Arabic script and that it could possibly even alter the meaning of religious texts. Exempt from this, however, were texts in Hebrew. So, until 1729, when Sultan



The Imperial Throne Room within the harem in Topkapi Palace



Sultan Abdul Hamid II favoured a transition to Western dress

Salut de l'Orient.
Derviches musiciens.

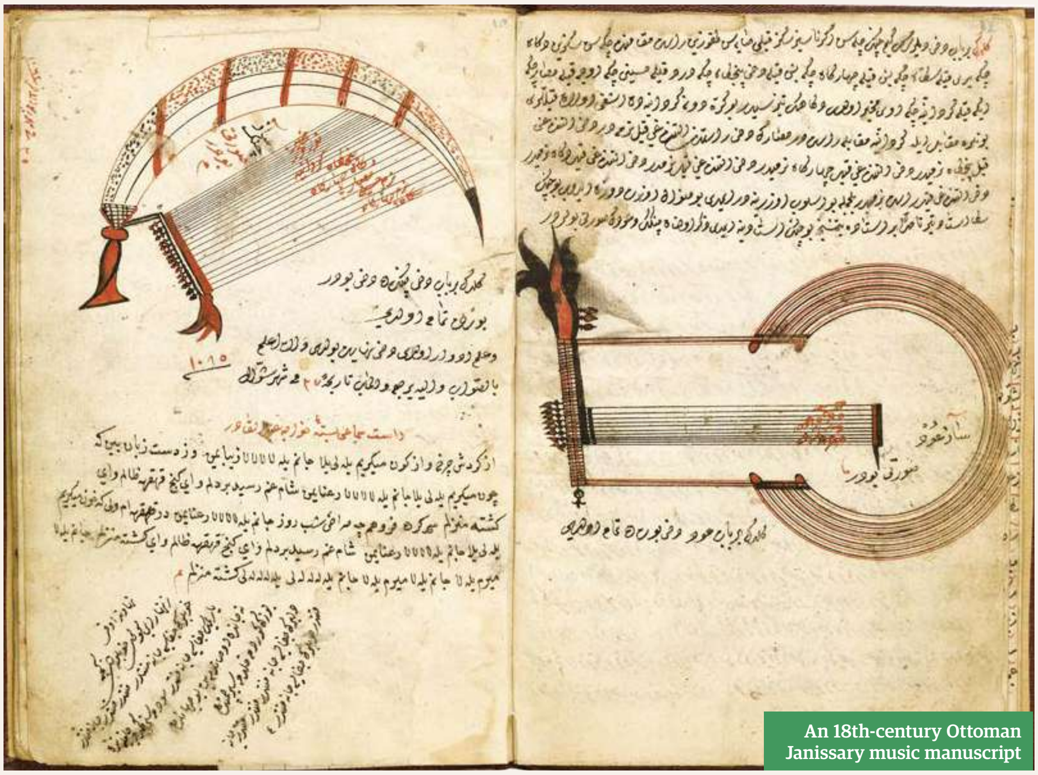
Mevlevi Dervishes play music in 1910

Ahmed III gave Hungarian convert Ibrahim Muteferrika permission to print non-religious texts, the only printed books were those of non-Muslim millets.

> “TO EVEN THINK OF THE HOUSE OF OSMAN ITSELF AS ‘TURKISH’ IS LARGELY A FALLACY”

Intermarriage was common and addressed by Hanafi fiqh (jurisprudence). An Ottoman book, ‘Behcetü'l-fetava’, gives endless examples of fatwas on marriage and divorce based on hypothetical situations between two stock characters, Zeyd and Hind. In some, they are both Christian. In others, one converts to Islam and the other doesn't. Almost every possible situation is given consideration.

Dr. Evgenia Kermeli of Hacettepe University gives us some examples: In 1651, just six years after the Ottoman conquest, a woman named Maryeta from Kasteli village in Crete successfully petitioned the sultan to annul the marriage of her unconsenting, underage daughter to a member of an elite Muslim military unit. Likewise, seven years later, we see the example of another Christian woman, Maria, daughter of Konstandin, who successfully petitioned the local Qadi for the annulment of her forced marriage.

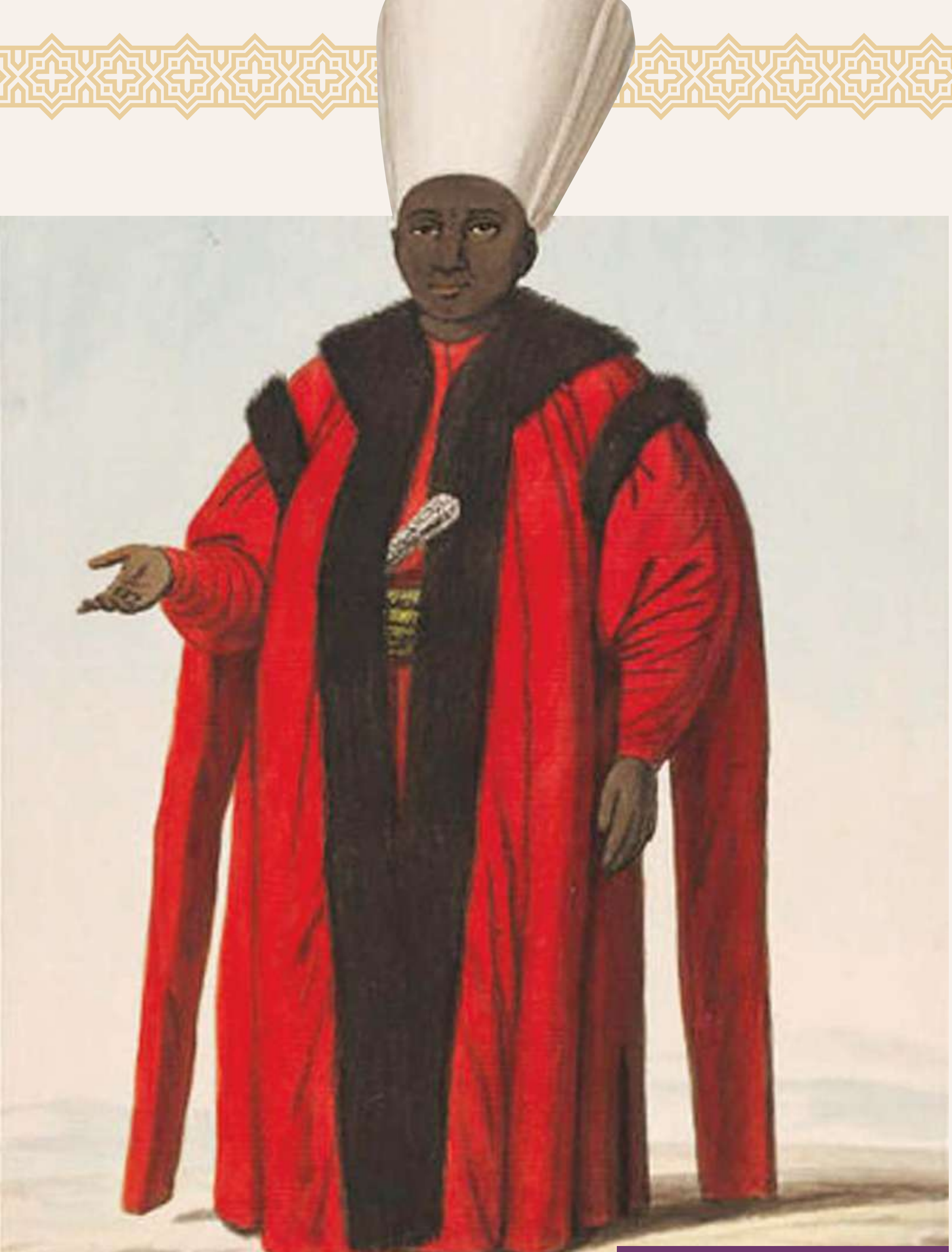


An 18th-century Ottoman Janissary music manuscript

But the price of increased autonomy was that the state held significant sway over the raising of children, and great resources were devoted to creating allegiance to the sultan from an early age. In this, Christian subjects in the Balkans, particularly, had to submit their children to the Sublime Porte, although Jews and some other groups were exempted. They were then educated, sometimes impressed into service in the military or government, and then later returned as Muslim Ottomans. This was the devşirme system.

Interestingly, it was a violation of the dhimmi protection of People of the Book (Ahl Al-Kitab) guaranteed to them under Islam. Regardless, as more men were enculturated into the Empire as Muslims, and as minorities became more powerful, the practice became more untenable. By 1648, devşirme formally came to an end.

The Ottoman Empire gradually drifted towards a constitutional monarchy government. Following Tanzimat in 1839, a great deal of reform morphed the situation for the various peoples of the Empire. Homosexuality was



The Kizlar Agha (Chief Black Eunuch), who controlled the doors to the harem

decriminalised, execution of apostates became illegal, tax farming ended, non-Muslims could serve in the military, and the power of the millets increased.

A good metaphor for understanding the Ottoman Empire is to consider the Ottoman court language, Osmanlica or lisân-ı Osmânî, as a case study. Although the language was governed by grammar rules of Turkic languages and relied on a Turkic substrate, the language itself was comprised of many foreign words and concepts. Written in the Arabic script, up to 88 per cent of its vocabulary was drawn mostly from Arabic and Persian, plus other languages. It borrowed some of their grammatical structures, too.

In the 1920s, in order to create a new national identity, Ataturk's government started to purge the language of 'foreign' influence and created many neologisms to replace them, relying on the Kaba Türkçe (rough Turkish) of the lower classes to form its basis. Still, about 14% of modern Turkish is derived from other languages – and despite Ataturk's wishes, many Ottomanisms persisted.

In order to avoid issues of succession-related power struggles, Ottoman sultans were born to women of the Imperial harem, who were largely foreign slaves. So, to even think of the House of Osman itself as 'Turkish' is largely a fallacy, genetically speaking. From the 16th-20th centuries, only Suleyman the Magnificent's mother was of Turkic origin – she was from a Crimean Tatar noble family. The rest were of Abkhazian, Georgian, French, Italian, Serbian, Ruthenian and possibly Arab ethnicities, amongst others. Despite this, the sultans remained Turkish in culture.

Likewise, the officials who ran the Seraglio were also non-Turks. The Kizlar Agha (Agha of the Girls), the Chief Black Eunuch, who guarded the harem and advised the Sultan in the Divan, was of Nubian origin. The Kapi Agha, the Chief White Eunuch, likewise, was a white slave often of Caucasian origin, included in the harem, who oversaw the Imperial schools, oversaw the waqfs, and sometimes the upkeep of the Haramayn (Mecca and Medina), as well as other roles.

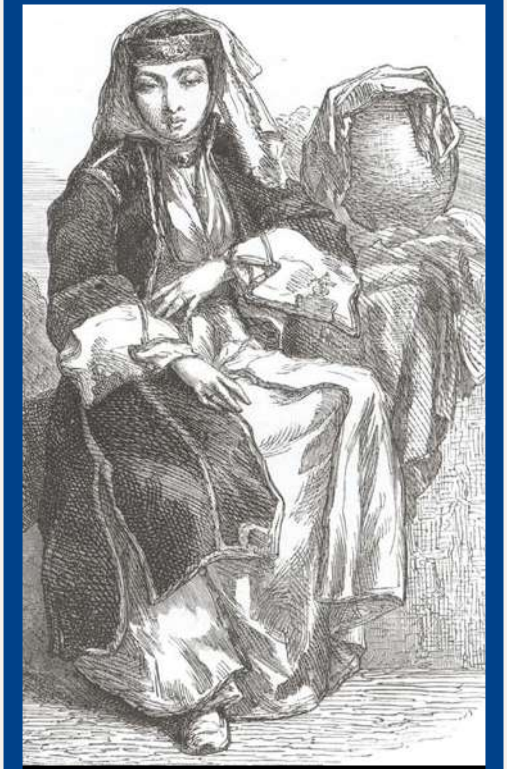
JEWISH SALONICA

From a safe haven away from persecution, to destruction

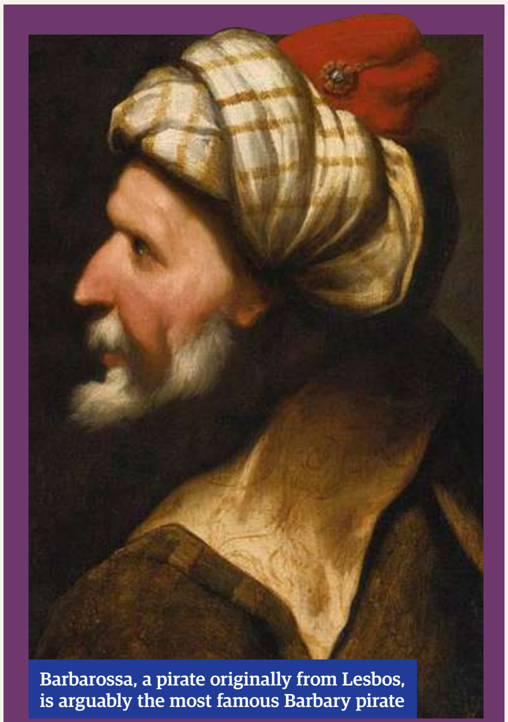
Following the fall of the Moorish Kingdom of Granada and the completion of the Castilian 'Reconquista' of Spain in 1492, the Christian Monarchs Isabela I and Ferdinand II proclaimed the Alhambra Decree, which expelled the Jewish population that had been living in a relatively peaceful coexistence in Spain during Al-Andalus. The Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II offered the Sephardic population refuge in places within his territory under dhimmi protection – cities such as Cairo, Istanbul, Aleppo and Damascus. As a result, Salonica (today Thessaloniki) became the centre of Sephardic Jewish life.

In all these regions, Hellenized and Mizrahi Jews had been small in number, and these communities were bolstered by these refugees – Salonica went from being a virtually non-existent community to a Jewish majority in the 16–17th century. Jewish life thrived, and it became a centre of the arts and learning for Jews from all over. Unfortunately, these numbers were also later expanded by forced migrations of other Jews to the community in the 16th century. And when an economic downturn happened in the 17th century, a Messianic movement under Sabbatai Zevi was suppressed and large numbers of his followers converted to Islam to avoid repression.

As this intellectual centre happened to later be the cradle of the Young Turks, this Dönme (renegade) population would later be accused by ideologues of destroying the Empire. Tragically, when the Axis occupied Greece in World War II, 90 per cent of the community was wiped out.



This engraving of an anonymous Jewish woman from Ottoman Salonica was made for the Royal Geographical Society in 1880



Barbarossa, a pirate originally from Lesbos, is arguably the most famous Barbary pirate

BARBARY CORSAIRS

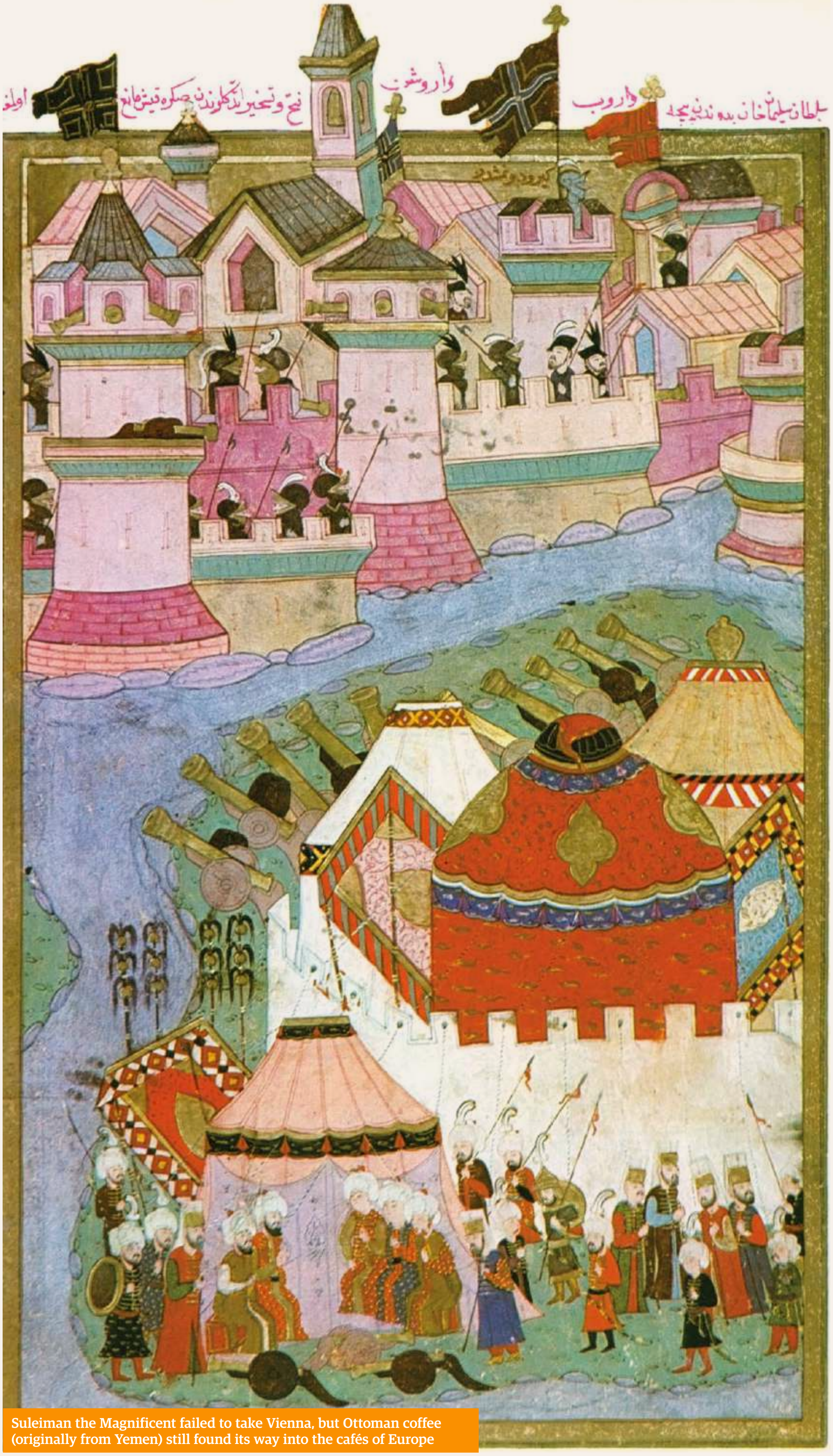
Diversity through piracy

Nothing can stir up the imagination of a five-year-old like pirates. And likewise, nothing brings together a ragtag group of diverse people like the prospect of making some money together. The Barbary Pirates, who preyed on European shipping in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, were a mixed group of people brought together in this lucrative enterprise. These included every imaginable maritime ethnic group of the Ottoman Empire as well as Western Europeans who had 'gone Turk' like John Ward (Birdy).

As they had large, powerful fleets at their command, they were only nominally under the control of the sultan. At the Battle of Lepanto they acted as an auxiliary navy, but at other times they were autonomous. At this same battle, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (later author of the famous 'Don Quixote') was captured, enslaved and subsequently ransomed.

> "ONE PIRATE MADE HERSELF QUEEN OF AN INDEPENDENT LAND"

One of the head commanders of the pirates involved in that same battle was the infamous Hayreddin Barbarossa. Another prominent pirate was a Moorish refugee from Spain after the Fall of Granada in 1492, Sayyida al Hurra. She entered into an alliance with Barbarossa and his brother Oruç Reis in which she preyed on Spanish ships in the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic while they did so in the East. As such, she made herself queen of an independent land in Tetouan in present-day Morocco. Ottoman-era pirates eventually became such a nuisance for Western ships that the fledgling United States would launch its first foreign military mission in Tripoli.



Suleiman the Magnificent failed to take Vienna, but Ottoman coffee (originally from Yemen) still found its way into the cafés of Europe

A Mehter Janissary reenactment band… with some modern liberties taken

“THE MAJORITY OF GRAND VIZIERS WERE OF NON-TURKISH ORIGIN… THIRTY GRAND VIZIERS WERE ALBANIAN ALONE”

While these positions seem, at first glance, to be subservient, they were not. True, they were enslaved peoples, but they often wielded great power and could influence policy, decisions or even succession within the Ottoman court. In one such case, historians suspect that Sultan Selim III's assassination by stabbing in the wake of his nizam-i-cedid reforms was likely at the hands of the Kizlar Agha, who maintained close relations with the Janissaries and Yamaks responsible for the revolt. Although a more extreme example, it was not an isolated incident, and the Kizlar Agha had enormous power at various points.

Elsewhere in the government, minorities were well represented, too. The majority of Grand Viziers, for example, were of non-Turkish origin. Some were Circassian, some were Greek, some were Abkhazian, some were Arab, some were Armenian, some were Serbs… the list goes on. Thirty Grand Viziers were Albanian alone. But it was in the military that they got their start.

Minorities had to show allegiance via military service, but they also used the military as a tool of social advancement.

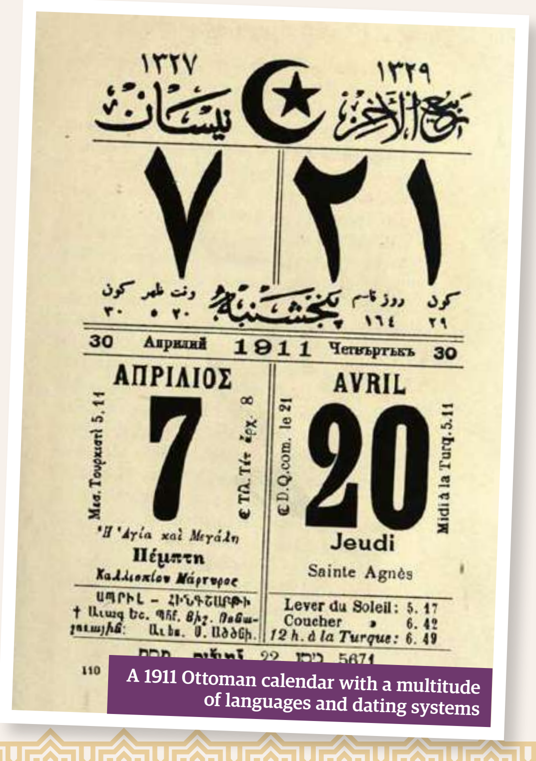
Ghilmans and Ghulams were early incarnations of this, inherited from the practices of predecessor states, which were either slaves captured in battle, or mercenaries. They were of Circassian, Georgian, Abkhazian and Caucasian origin early on. Notably, the Mamluks who had ejected the Kurdish Ayyubid dynasty of Saladin from Egypt and Syria were of mixed Circassian-Turkish ancestry. When the Ottomans defeated the Mamluks in 1517, they inherited these soldiers from their vassals. Already, by the time of the conquest of the Balkans, soldiers from Greater Syria comprised the bulk of the Ottoman force.

Elsewhere, the Arab-Berber States of North Africa were used by the Ottoman Empire as mercenaries to prey on European ships, starting with the war with Venice in the 16th century. In doing so, they gained enough wealth and power that they were able to gain autonomy for themselves.

Nonetheless, it was the Janissaries who were the ultimate expression of the power of minorities in the Ottoman army.

The Janissaries were initially formed out of devşirme tributes, but once they realised their own power, they used it as leverage. They were initially created as a counterbalance for the Shi'i Qizilbash of the Safavid Sufi order in Eastern Anatolia (and later rival empire). They revolted as slaves and emerged a paid force. As Muslims could not be enslaved, they were mostly Balkan Christians of Albanian, Bosnian, Serbian, Greek and other ethnicities and, once converted, adhered to the Bektashi Sufi Order. By the 17th century they were kingmakers and the sultans created special feasts called Safranpilav (Saffron pilaf), which, if refused, signified their disapproval.

In fact, the symbolism of food was heavy throughout the Janissary order. Their leader carried a giant, oversized spoon to signify his



١٣٢٧ نيسان ١٣٢٩ ربيع الآخر

٧ ٢١

كون ٣٠ وقت ظهر ٥ ٢٠ پنجشنبه روز قاسم ١٦٤ كون ٢٩

30 Апрвластиялий 1911 Четвъртъкъ 30

ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΣ

Μεσ. Τουρκιστί 5. 11

7

ΕΤΩ. Τίτ ἐρχ. 8

Ἡ Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη

Πέμπτη

Καλλιοπίου Μάρτυρος

ԱՊՐԻԼ – ՀԻՆԳՇԱԲԹԻ

AVRIL

E.D.Q.com. le 21

20

Midi à la Turq. 5.11

Jeudi

Sainte Agnès

Lever du Soleil: 5. 17

Coucher » 6. 42

12 h. à la Turque: 6. 49

22 5671

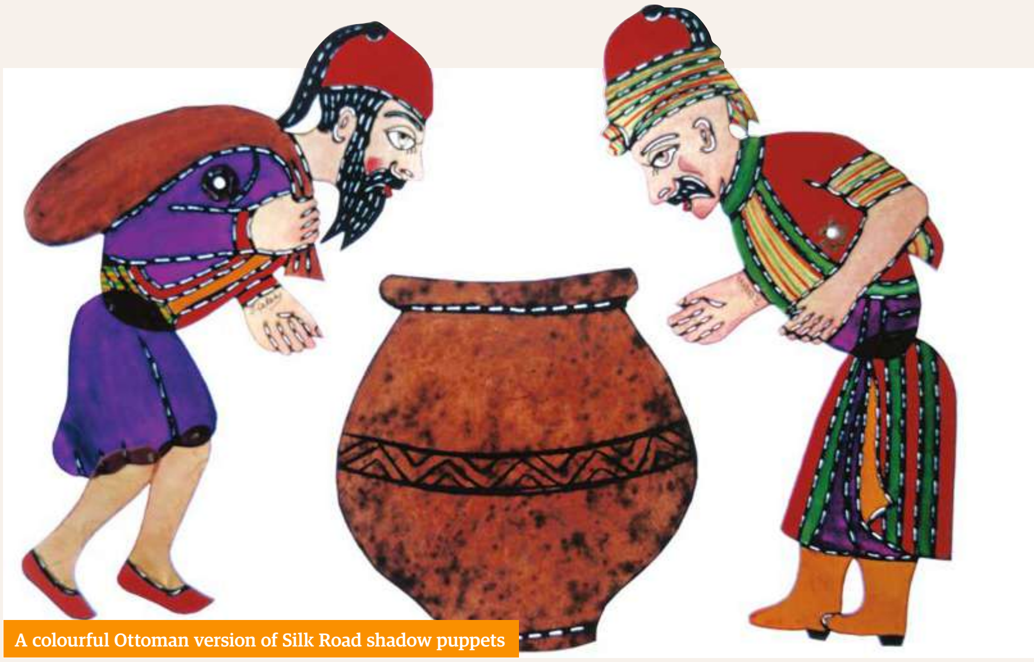
110

A 1911 Ottoman calendar with a multitude of languages and dating systems leadership. And they tipped over their pots when they were intending to revolt. Imagine Yelp reviewers that could trigger an assassination.

Their revolts were legendary.

Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was a Bosnian Janissary who was eventually promoted to Grand Vizier and took on the role of the de facto ruler for a period of almost 14 years during the reigns of Suleyman I, Selim II, and Murad III. Likewise, Skanderbeg was an Albanian tribute who went back to his lands and seized Kruje with falsified papers from the sultan and then launched a 25-year rebellion that made Albania more or less independent during that time. And these two were far from alone.

The Janissaries were famous for their Mehter band whose buzzing zurnas, davuls and cymbals were meant to strike fear into the hearts of enemies during sieges and raise the spirits of their own army. Before them, the Abbassids and Umayyads and their successors in the Islamicate world had used military bands to great effect, and the Janissaries continued on with this tradition in the Ottoman context. As they gathered outside Vienna, they played on as they waited for guns stuck in the mud in the Balkans.


A colourful Ottoman version of Silk Road shadow puppets

> “The Janissaries’ Mehter band struck fear into the hearts of their enemies and raised their own spirits”

Following the battle of Vienna in 1683, when Polish Winged Hussars saved the city from an imminent Ottoman siege, European culture was deeply affected. In addition to the introduction of coffee, the music of the Ottoman Janissary Corps came to influence an entire fad in Europe of music composed ‘Alla Turca’ or ‘in the Turkish style’. Cymbals and percussion were introduced. And, in turn, the later Viennese Mozart’s impression of a Janissary band would even come to influence modern jazz musician Dave Brubeck’s ‘Blue Rondo à la Turk’. This diverse lineage reflects the heritage of a diverse musical tradition.

Before the Ottoman Empire, because of attitudes towards music’s dubious legality in Islam, it was the Jews or Christians of the Abbasid or Umayyad Empires who were integral in preserving, maintaining and innovating within the tradition. And likewise, in the Ottoman Empire, it was minorities who did the same.

During the reign of Selim III, an Armenian composer named Hampartsoum Limondjian developed another system of notation based on a system used in Armenian Church chant. With this, he preserved six books’ worth of melodies of his day for the sultan, but also created new works, theory, and maqams (modes), which remain in practice. Additionally, he composed Turkish-influenced pieces for the Armenian church.

THE SULTAN’S PLATE

On the table, Ottoman diversity was expressed through a common cuisine

Ah, the humble kebab – the nightcap for a probably regrettable night out. In former Ottoman lands, though, they’re an art refined over centuries of cross-cultural collaboration – not to mention much better.

Ottoman cuisine was the slow-stewed amalgamation of the food of the diverse peoples of Mesopotamia, the Near East, the Balkans, Greece, Central Asia, the Silk Road and beyond. The area was so eager for innovation that New World crops like tomatoes, peppers and squash were eagerly and rapidly adopted and stuffed with Old World rice and bulgur wheat. From Central Asia, the Ottoman kitchen got dough-based dumplings like manti or shish barak. Ottoman sultans demanded the culinary know-how of the Aleppo Sanjak prefecture, resulting in dishes like Iskender kebab and muhammara among many others. From Anatolia, döner, shawarma and gyros emerged from a common ancestor. Coffee came from Yemen and the Horn of Africa. Tea came overland on the Silk Road. And of course, we see the spread of baklava all over Ottoman lands, from Azerbaijan to Greece and Macedonia.

When peasants revolted, to mark an event or to celebrate a feast, the sultan distributed chickpeas, meat and bread to the people. It wasn’t such a bad way to keep the peace after all.

Colourful macun (sweet paste) at an Istanbul confectioner’s stand

© Alamy

In other arts and crafts we see the same picture. The fine jewellery makers were mostly Armenians and Jews. The belly dancers in the sultan’s court were mostly Roma. The Karagöz shadow puppetry tradition came westward from East Asia on the Silk Road, picking up elements all along the way. And on the sultan’s table, Levantine people introduced coffee from Yemen, lahmacun meat pies and other culinary traditions. The plate itself could have been made from Iznik pottery, which itself mixed Ming Chinese, Abbasid and other Silk Road traditions to come up with a new form.

The mixing of cultures penetrated every aspect of life, but, eventually, the symphony would come to a screeching halt.

Nationalism grew among the populations and started chipping away at the structural integrity of the Empire. Like termites chewing on the frame of a wooden house, it was only a matter of time until these social forces would bring it all crashing down.

In 1803, following Napoleon’s withdrawal from Egypt after a disastrous Levant campaign, an Albanian Janissary leader, Muhammad Ali Pasha, overthrew Ottoman forces and Mamluk vassals in Egypt. He took the Janissary pastime of wreaking havoc to a new level, because he saw himself as the rightful heir to the legacy of the decaying Empire. Likewise, the Arab populace was shocked to see how much more advanced French troops were and they scrambled to make up for lost time. A literary and cultural Nahda (renaissance/reawakening) started in the Arab region with Muhammad Ali Pasha’s patronage, which marked a shift in consciousness.

But the 1876 Constitution was the domino that started a chain reaction that would eventually end

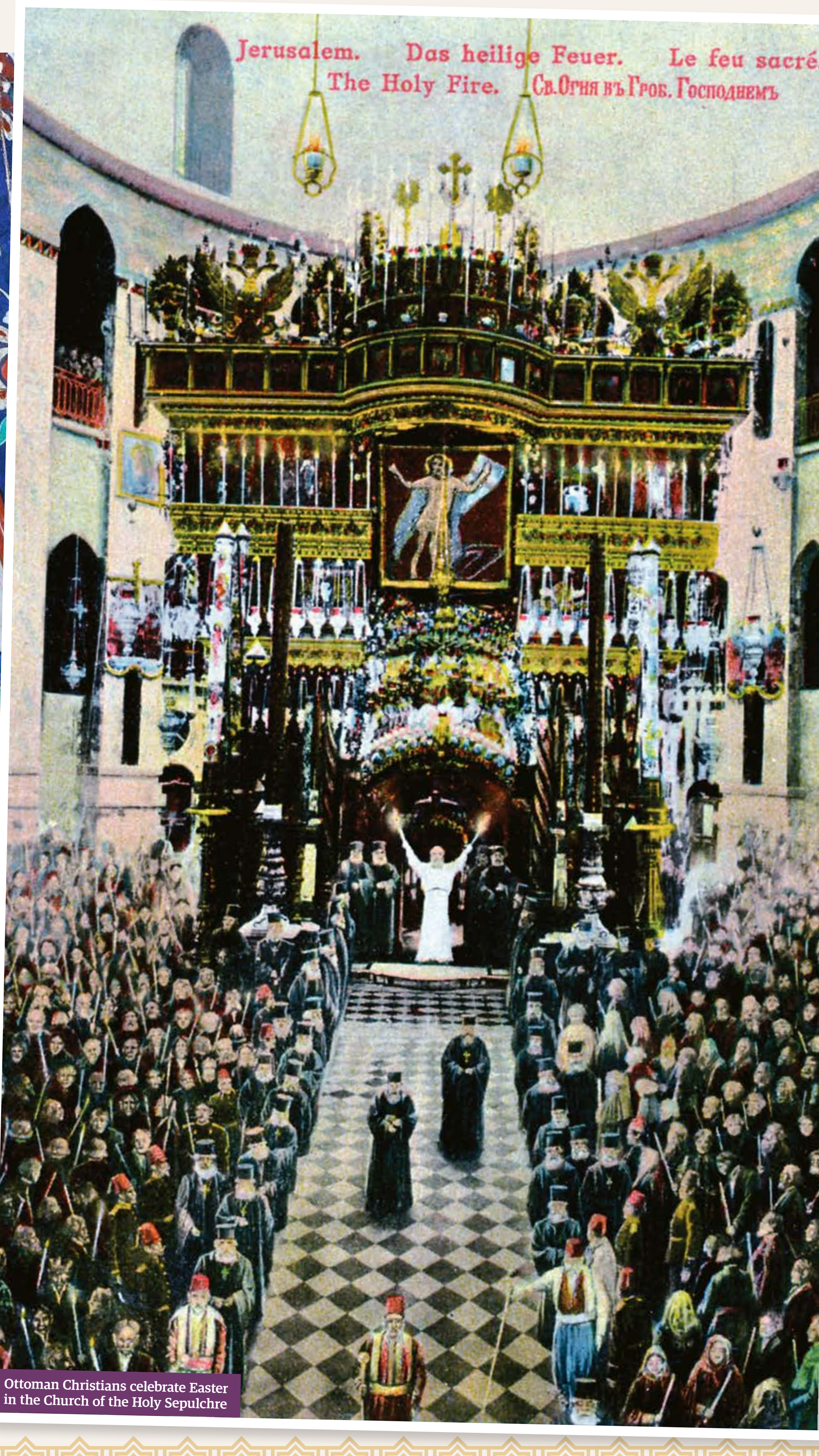
The detail of a tile from a mosque built for Bosnian Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha by Albanian master architect Mimar Sinan Pasha

the Empire. With it, Turkish was made the sole official language of the state. In contrast, Turkish nationalists claimed that only Turks could be loyal to the state, and, following the Young Turk Revolution in 1909, they made sure only Turkish speakers could occupy government positions.

Likewise, they began to encourage social engineering projects of less Turkifiable populations that culminated in the Hamidian massacres, the later Assyrian and Armenian genocides, other purges and forced migration population swaps.

When World War I broke out, the Arabs saw their moment to revolt. Assisted by European powers, this was finally enough to finish off the Empire. And in 1922, a six-century old state ran out of time.

In the end, the legacy of a diverse Ottoman Empire is reflected within the peoples that inhabit its former domain and their social life and laws. In its former heartland in Anatolia, Oghuz Turkic DNA comprises only a small fraction of the genetic make-up of modern Turkish people. The majority is comprised of a fascinating mixture of Balkan, Greek, Middle Eastern/West Asian and North African, yet their tongues still speak a Turkic language. And in places like Palestine, Syria, Israel, Lebanon and many others, the Ottoman legal system still forms the basis of law to varying degrees.

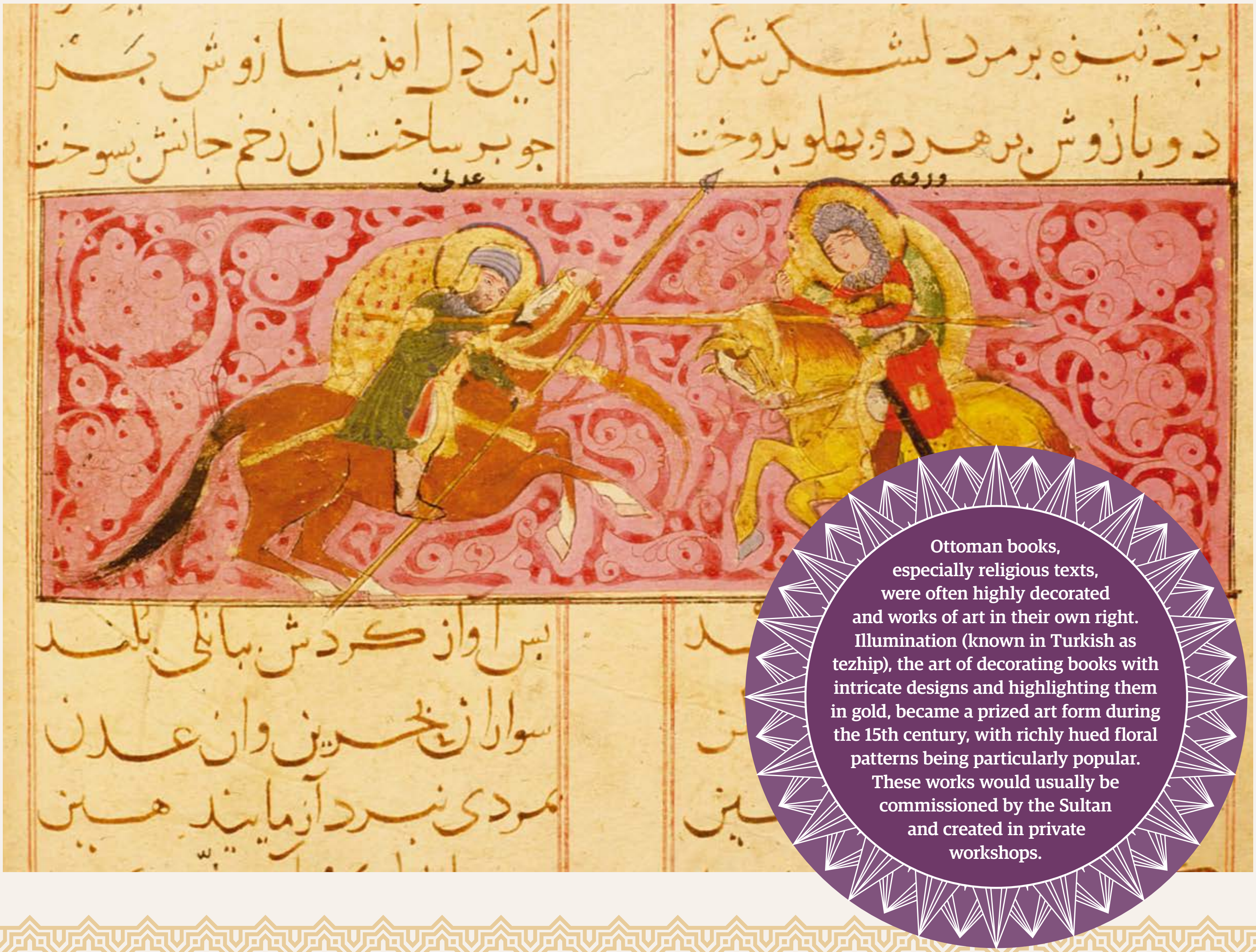

Jerusalem. Das heilige Feuer. Le feu sacré
The Holy Fire. Св.Огня въ Гроб. Господнемъ

Ottoman Christians celebrate Easter in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

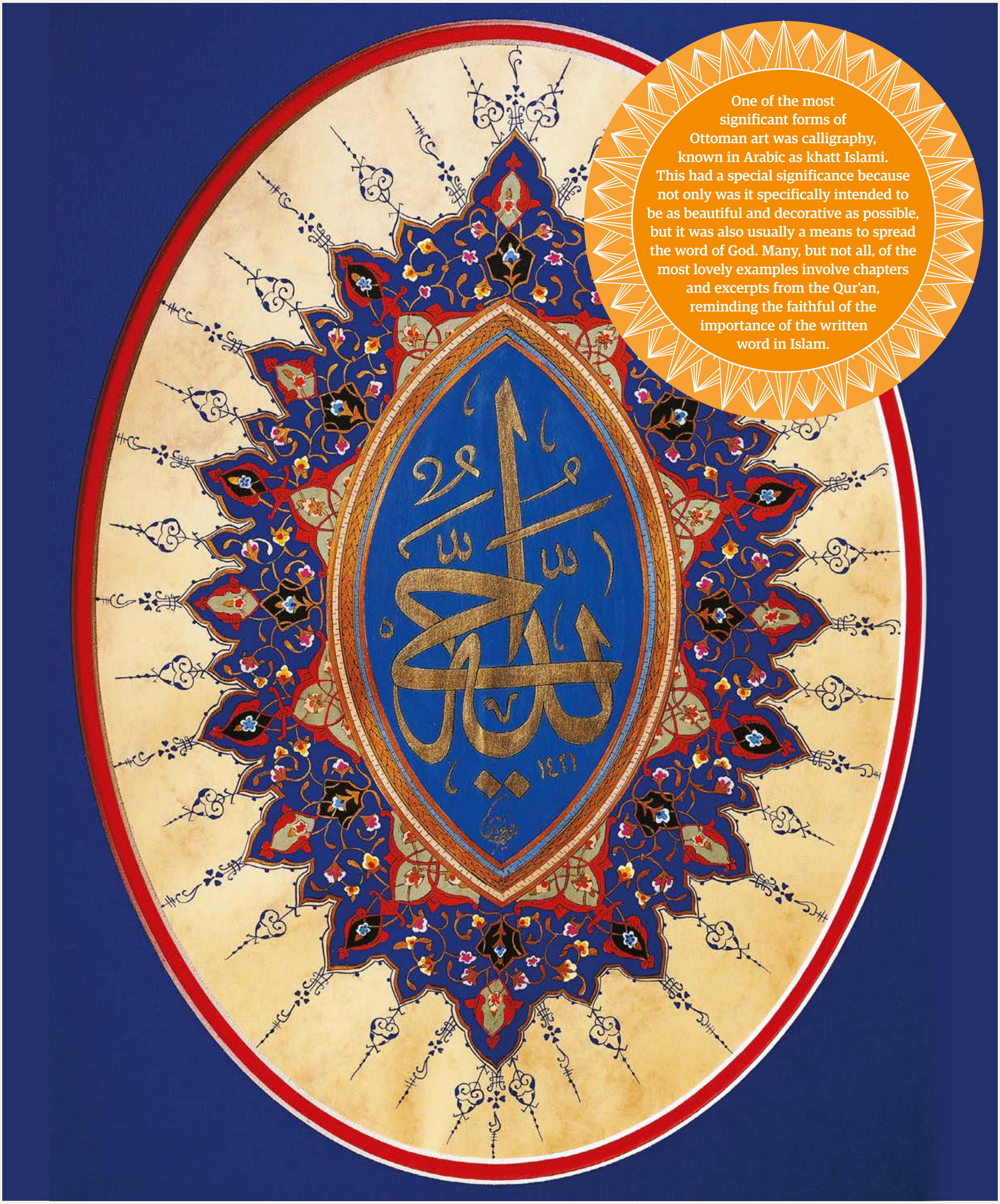
OTTOMAN ART GALLERY

Behind the doors of their fortresses and mosques, the Ottomans covered their buildings in beautiful artwork – forging a new style completely unlike anything seen before

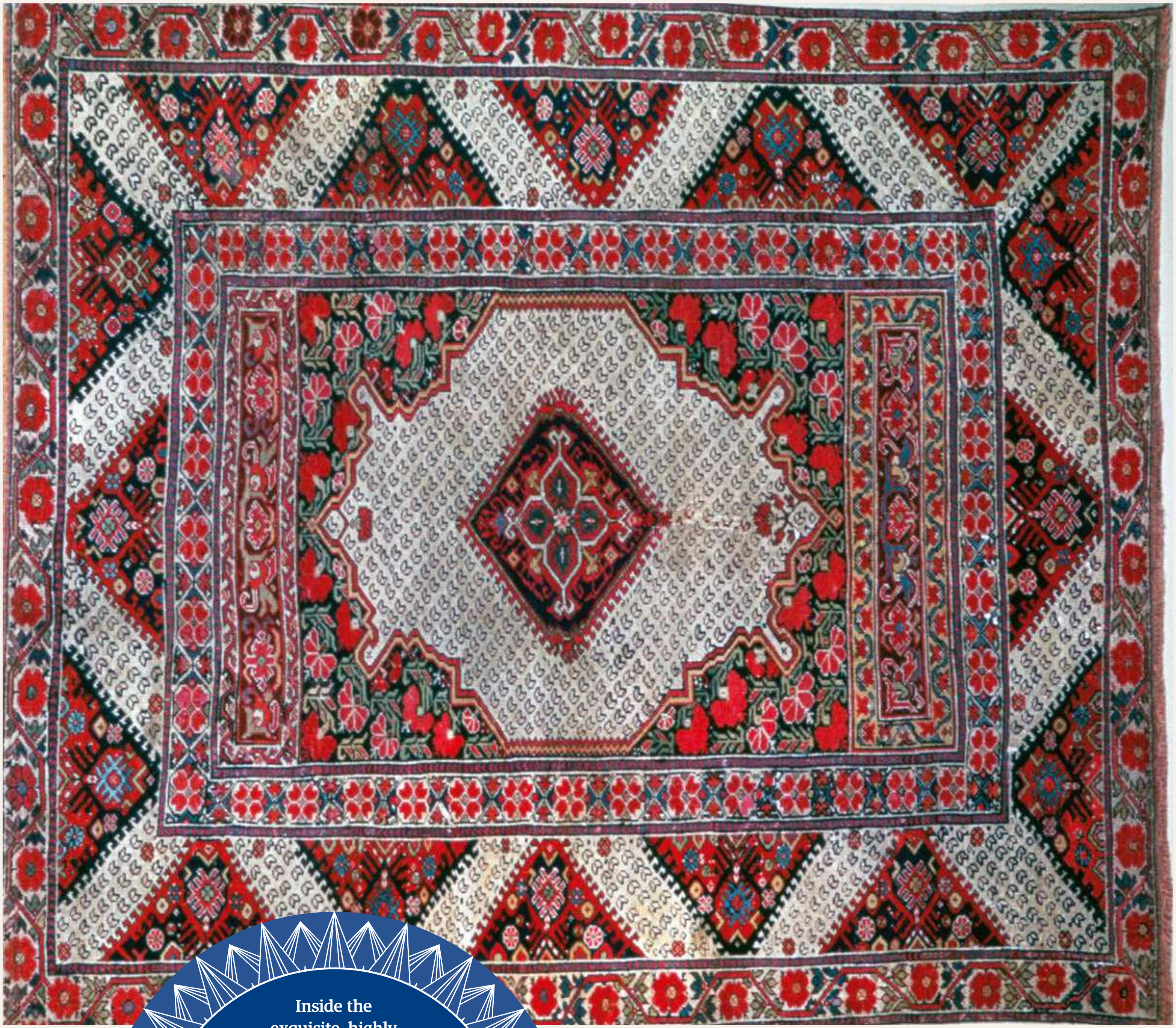
Written by Melanie Clegg



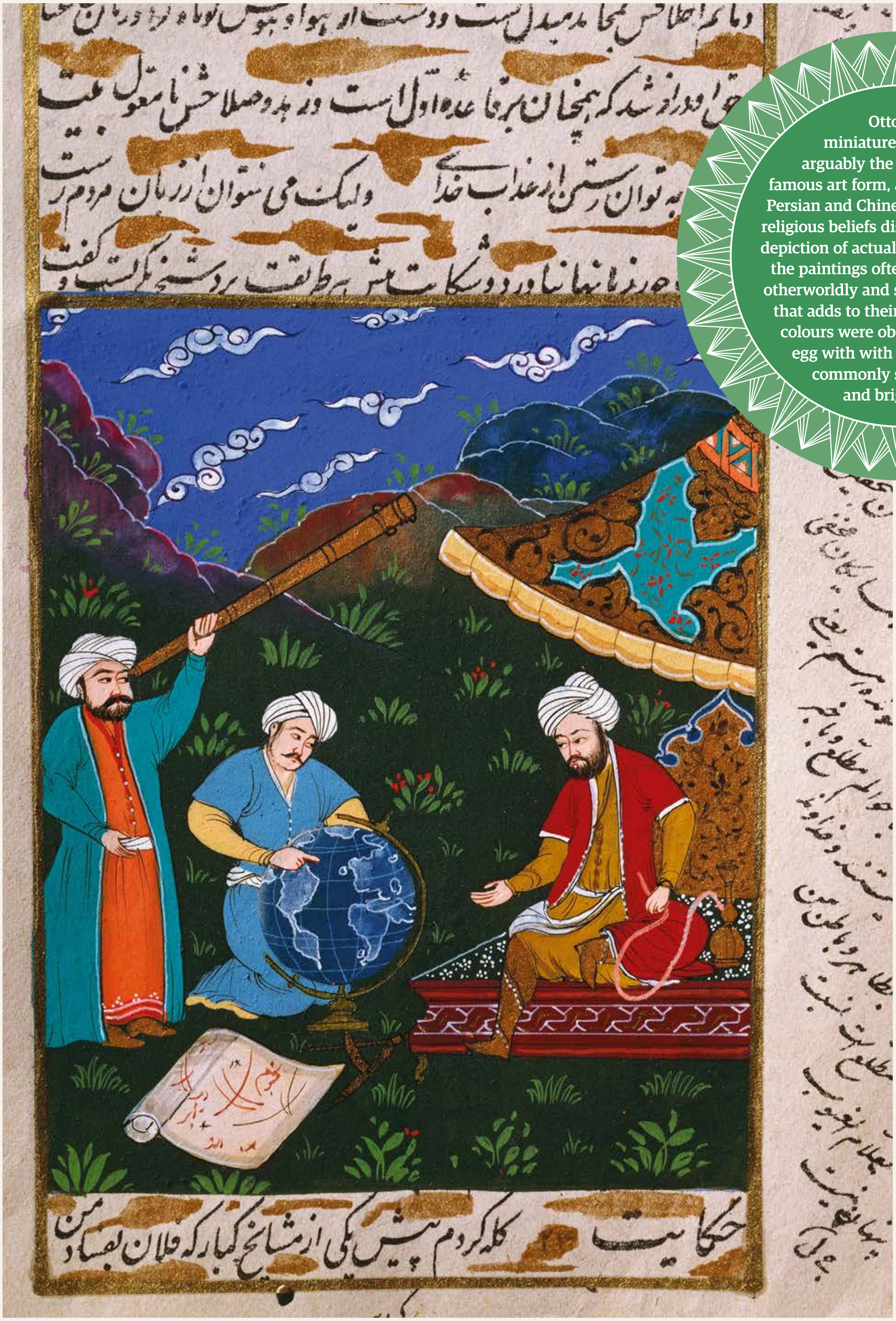
Ottoman books, especially religious texts, were often highly decorated and works of art in their own right. Illumination (known in Turkish as tezhip), the art of decorating books with intricate designs and highlighting them in gold, became a prized art form during the 15th century, with richly hued floral patterns being particularly popular. These works would usually be commissioned by the Sultan and created in private workshops.



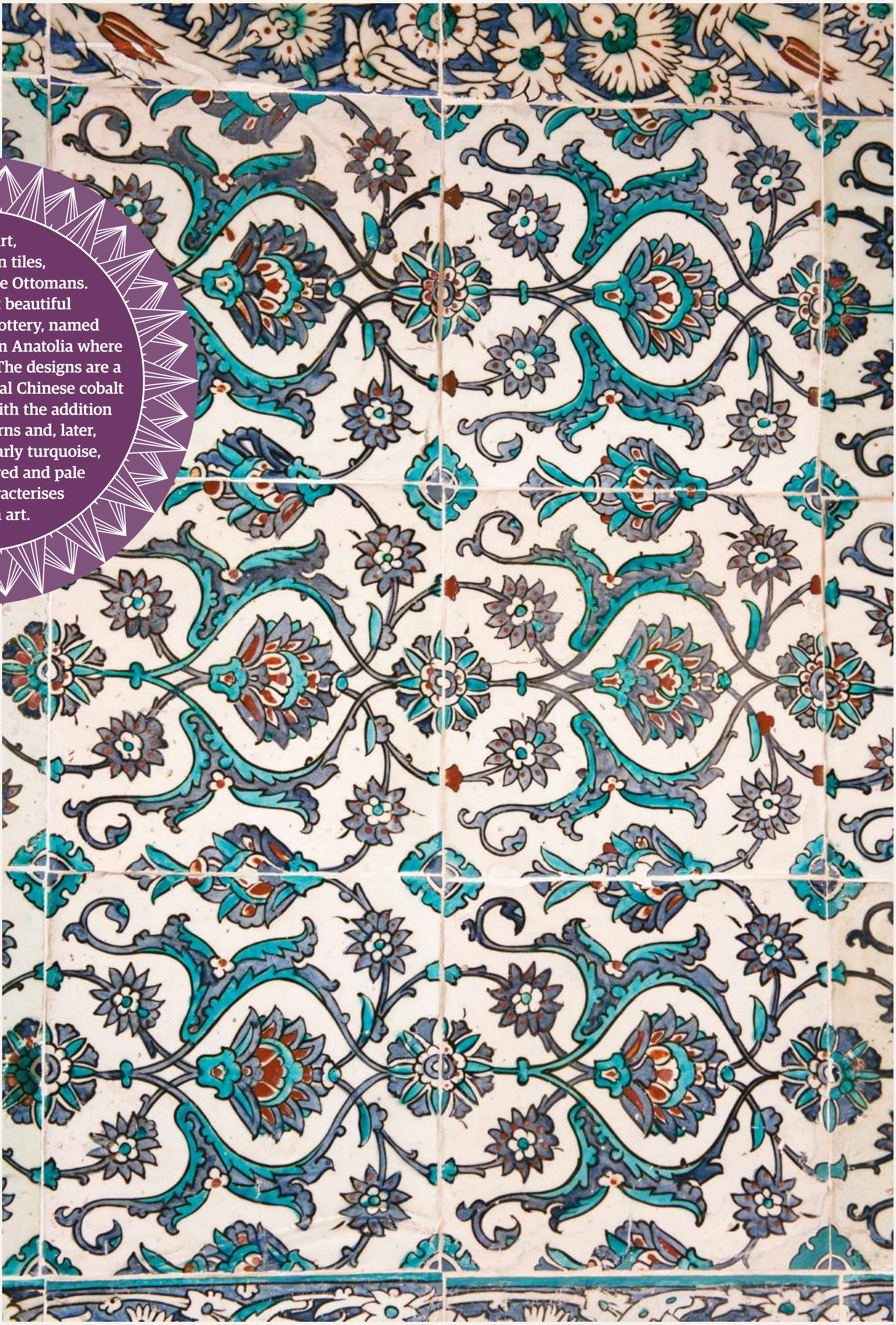
One of the most significant forms of Ottoman art was calligraphy, known in Arabic as khatt Islami. This had a special significance because not only was it specifically intended to be as beautiful and decorative as possible, but it was also usually a means to spread the word of God. Many, but not all, of the most lovely examples involve chapters and excerpts from the Qur'an, reminding the faithful of the importance of the written word in Islam.



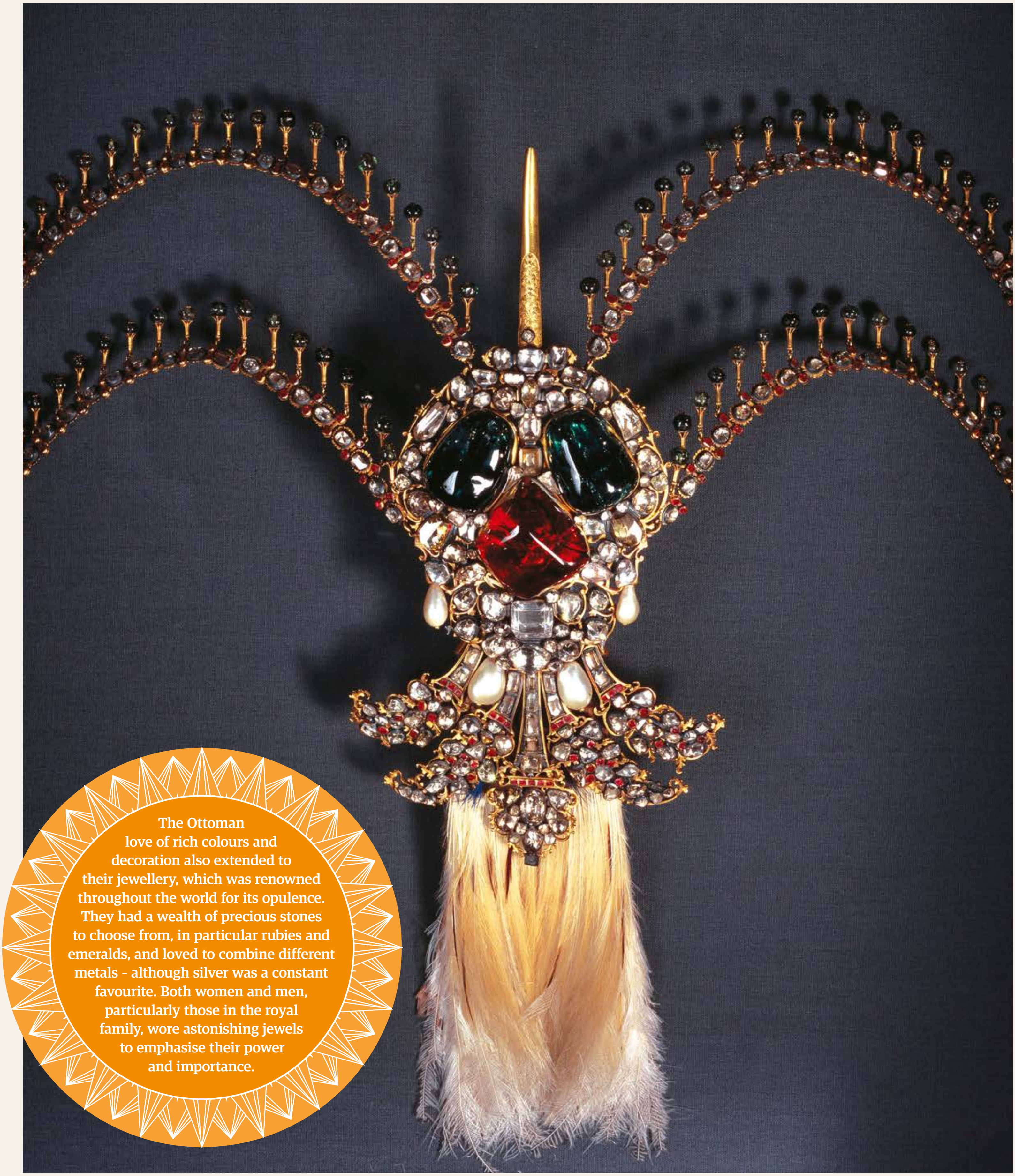
Inside the exquisite, highly decorated interiors of the Ottoman Empire's palaces and mosques were lovely rugs and carpets, which were brightly coloured and intricately patterned. These rugs were vastly expensive and, after trade routes were established during the 14th century, highly prized throughout Europe, where they were regarded as prestigious status symbols that only the very wealthiest could afford.



Ottoman miniature painting is arguably the empire's most famous art form, and has its basis in Persian and Chinese art. As Ottoman religious beliefs discouraged a faithful depiction of actual people and objects, the paintings often have a mystical, otherworldly and stylised appearance that adds to their charm. The vivid colours were obtained by mixing egg with with pigments, most commonly scarlet, green and bright blue.



Ceramic art, particularly on tiles, flourished under the Ottomans. Perhaps the most beautiful examples are Iznik pottery, named after the town in western Anatolia where it was originally made. The designs are a combination of traditional Chinese cobalt blue and white ware with the addition of the intricate patterns and, later, rich colours, particularly turquoise, sage green, russet red and pale purple that characterises all Ottoman art.



The Ottoman love of rich colours and decoration also extended to their jewellery, which was renowned throughout the world for its opulence. They had a wealth of precious stones to choose from, in particular rubies and emeralds, and loved to combine different metals - although silver was a constant favourite. Both women and men, particularly those in the royal family, wore astonishing jewels to emphasise their power and importance.

HAGIA SOPHIA

Turkey, 537 – Present

The site of Hagia Sophia has been a holy place for centuries. Constantine I built a church on the foundations of a pagan temple in 325 CE and this was restored and then extended several times. However, after the church was destroyed by fire during the Nika Riots in 532, Emperor Justinian I had a grand vision. Wanting to restore the empire to its former glory, he decided to build the greatest church the world had ever seen.

Justinian hired a pair of famed mathematicians, Anthemios and Isidore, to design it. In 537, just under six years later, the Hagia Sophia (meaning 'Holy Wisdom') was completed. Its enormous dome relied on a revolutionary design that made it the largest in the world for almost a millennium.

Despite its incredible design, the centuries were hard on the awe-inspiring church and subsequent Byzantine emperors used repairs as opportunities to add their name to it. Some were beautiful additions – for example, Justinian's successor Justin II covered the walls with intricate mosaics. However, not every ruler was a patron of the arts. In 726, Emperor Leo III, following a civil war, forbade religious icons and this iconoclasm continued until 842 and saw the destruction of religious icons in churches across the land.

As the Byzantine Empire slowly collapsed, Islamic ones like the Ottomans replaced it. This threat prompted Western Christian nations to crusade and reclaim the 'Holy Land'. The Crusades never achieved long-term success, however, and even catalysed the fall of Constantinople in 1453 when Ottoman sultan Mehmed the Conqueror took the city. Fortunately, he was struck by the beauty of Hagia Sophia and he made Constantinople his capital. Hagia Sophia (now called Aya Sofya) was converted into a mosque and its Christian art was covered or replaced with Islamic calligraphy. Hagia Sophia's beauty would inspire the next generation of Ottoman art.

When the Ottoman Empire fell after World War I, the secular nation of Turkey was created and Hagia Sophia became a museum, which you can still visit today in modern-day Istanbul.

01 Squaring the circle

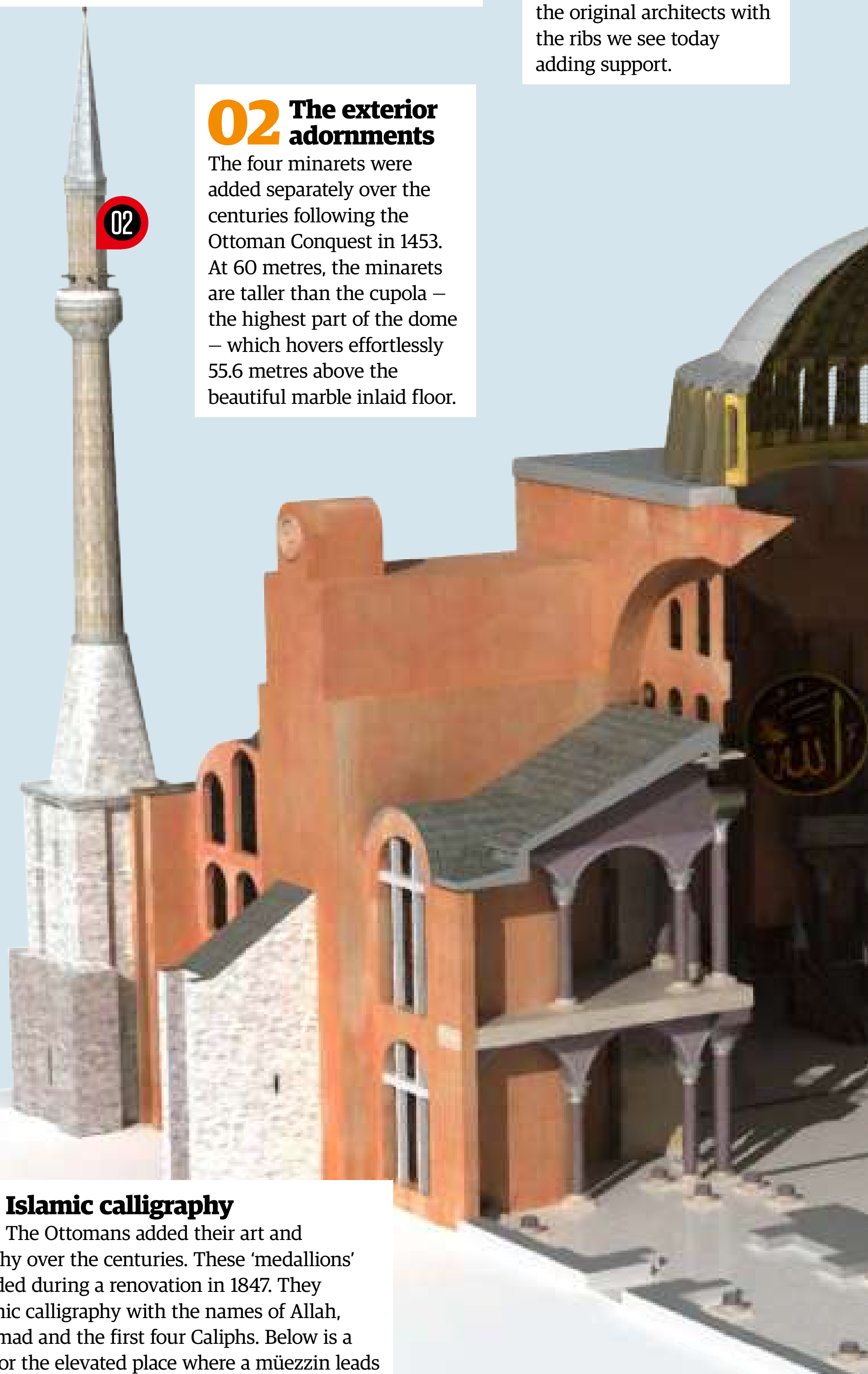
What gives Hagia Sophia its beauty is the revolutionary way in which the architects created an immense open space. It is a dome built upon two semi-domes. In order to do this, it was necessary to 'square the circle', which means to build a circular dome upon the square base. Hagia Sophia was one of the first structures to make use of this technique. Byzantine paintings of six-winged angels called seraphs (Greek: hexapterygon) still line the pendentives.

03 A miracle of construction

A marvel of engineering, Hagia Sophia was originally completed only five years after construction began. But 20 years later the dome collapsed and was repaired by the nephew of one of the original architects with the ribs we see today adding support.

02 The exterior adornments

The four minarets were added separately over the centuries following the Ottoman Conquest in 1453. At 60 metres, the minarets are taller than the cupola – the highest part of the dome – which hovers effortlessly 55.6 metres above the beautiful marble inlaid floor.



10 Islamic calligraphy

The Ottomans added their art and calligraphy over the centuries. These 'medallions' were added during a renovation in 1847. They are Islamic calligraphy with the names of Allah, Muhammad and the first four Caliphs. Below is a minbar, or the elevated place where a müezzin leads and recites the call to prayer within the mosque.

04 Christian and Islamic fusion

Both the Byzantines and the Ottomans removed Christian mosaics at different times and replaced them with nonrepresentational art like calligraphy and geometric shapes. The Islamic calligraphy inside the dome probably covers an original Byzantine mosaic. A surviving mosaic of a Christ Pantocrator, the so-called Deësis mosaic, probably dates from the 13th century and is considered one of the finest examples of late Byzantine mosaics.

06 Doge Dandolo's tomb

Hagia Sophia started out as a Greek Orthodox church. Then the Fourth Crusade, led by Venetians in 1204, sacked Constantinople and turned it into a Catholic one until the Byzantines returned in 1261. In 1453, the Ottomans turned it into a mosque, which it remained until 1934 when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk ordered it to be turned into a museum. A reminder of the Venetian Crusade, Dandolo, the 41st doge of Venice, is buried here.

07 The greatest temple ever built

Even today, when one gazes into the ancient dome, one is left speechless in its awe-inspiring space and history spanning centuries. Fortunately, the Byzantine emperor Justinian had the words, comparing it favourably with the biblical First Temple in Jerusalem, saying, "O, Solomon, I have outdone thee!"

05 Imperial strength

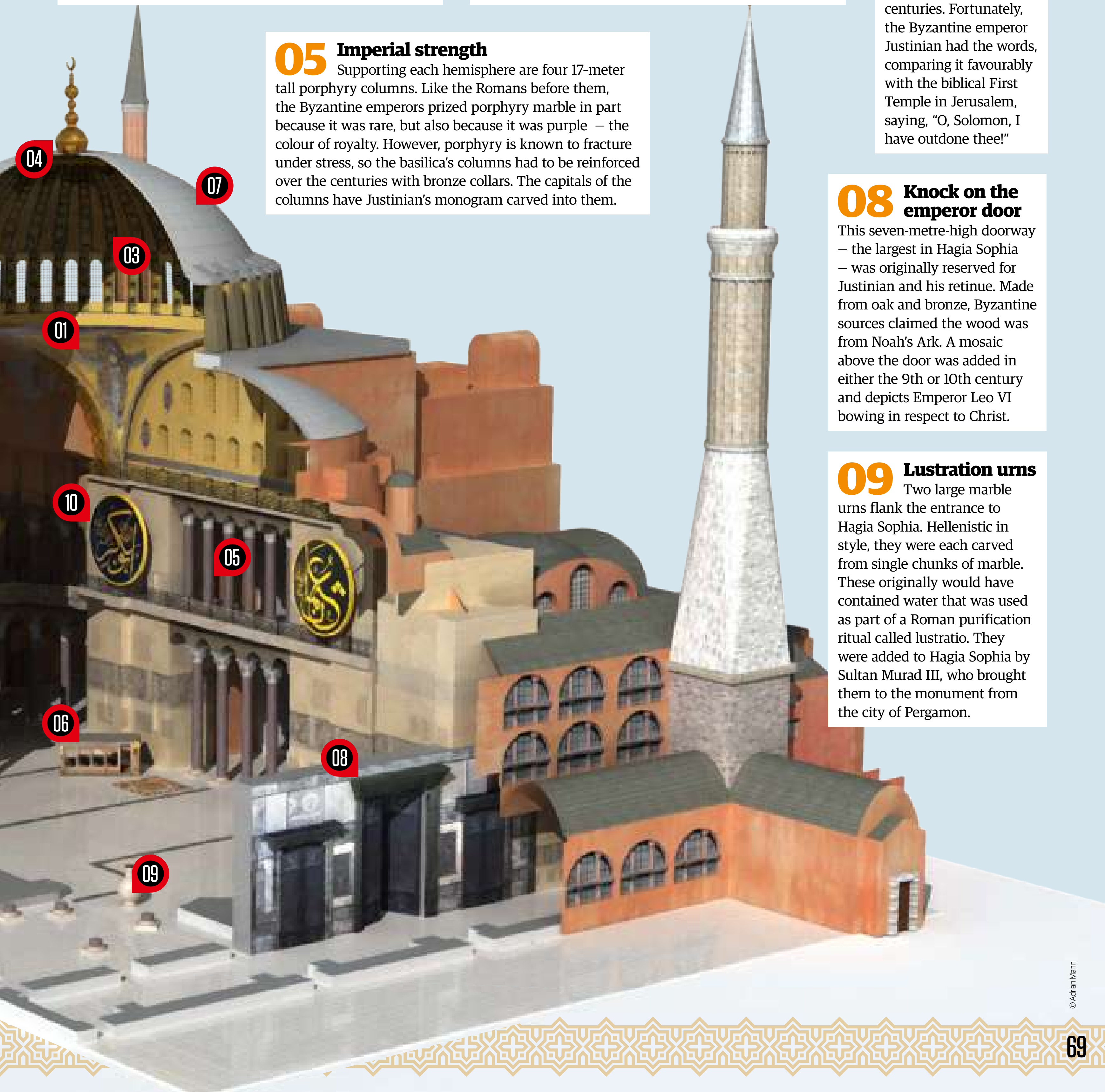
Supporting each hemisphere are four 17-meter tall porphyry columns. Like the Romans before them, the Byzantine emperors prized porphyry marble in part because it was rare, but also because it was purple – the colour of royalty. However, porphyry is known to fracture under stress, so the basilica's columns had to be reinforced over the centuries with bronze collars. The capitals of the columns have Justinian's monogram carved into them.

08 Knock on the emperor door

This seven-metre-high doorway – the largest in Hagia Sophia – was originally reserved for Justinian and his retinue. Made from oak and bronze, Byzantine sources claimed the wood was from Noah's Ark. A mosaic above the door was added in either the 9th or 10th century and depicts Emperor Leo VI bowing in respect to Christ.

09 Lustration urns

Two large marble urns flank the entrance to Hagia Sophia. Hellenistic in style, they were each carved from single chunks of marble. These originally would have contained water that was used as part of a Roman purification ritual called lustratio. They were added to Hagia Sophia by Sultan Murad III, who brought them to the monument from the city of Pergamon.



© Adrian Mann

PLACES TO EXPLORE

OTTOMAN MOSQUES

Visit these feats of supreme architecture in the Islamic world

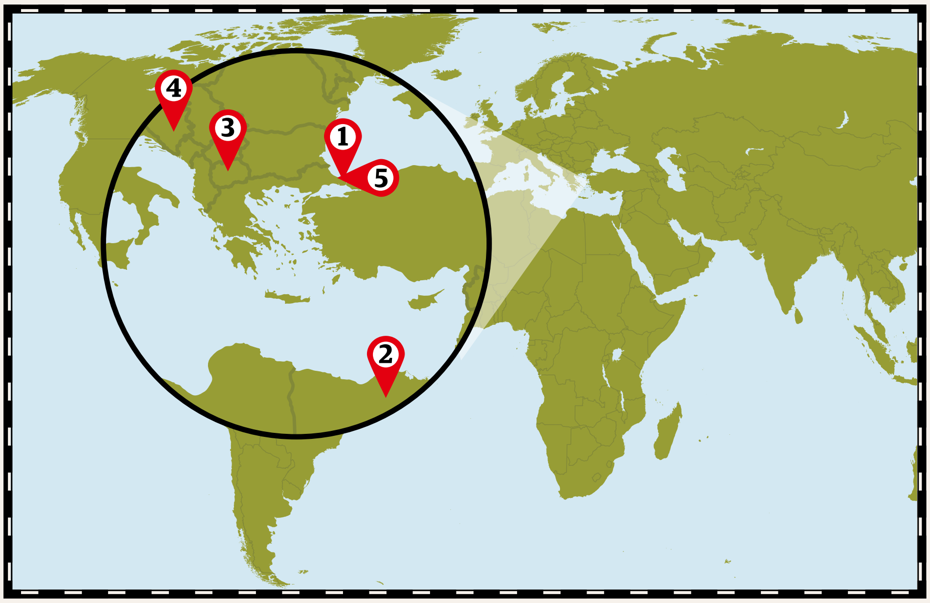
1 BLUE MOSQUE

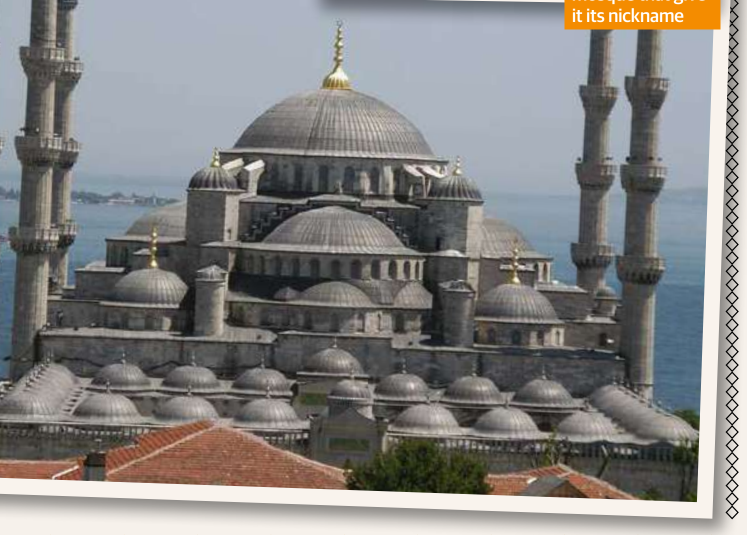
ISTANBUL

Perhaps one of Istanbul's most famous buildings, the Blue Mosque, also known as the Sultan Ahmed Mosque after its imperial creator, is nothing short of stunning. Its minarets and ripple of domes create a unique silhouette on the Istanbul skyline, making the mosque able to hold its own in beauty next to its neighbour Hagia Sophia.

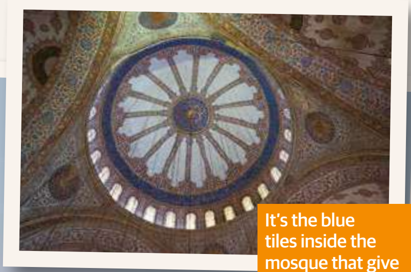
Built under the orders of Sultan Ahmed I, who reigned the Ottoman Empire from 1603 to 1617 and is buried there, this mosque was certainly a statement. Architect Sedefkâr Mehmet Ağa's design plays host to six minarets - more than any other mosque at the time - and the courtyard was the biggest in any mosque throughout the empire. However, none of this is what it's famous for today. The mosque's interior is decorated with tens of thousands of blue İznik tiles, giving the building its nickname, and 260 windows let in natural light that allows you to see the inside in all its glory.

The Blue Mosque is open every day, but admission is not allowed during prayer hours or until 2.30pm on Fridays. Entrance is free.





With six minarets and several domes, this mosque is nothing less than stunning to look at



It's the blue tiles inside the mosque that give it its nickname

2 MOSQUE OF MUHAMMAD ALI

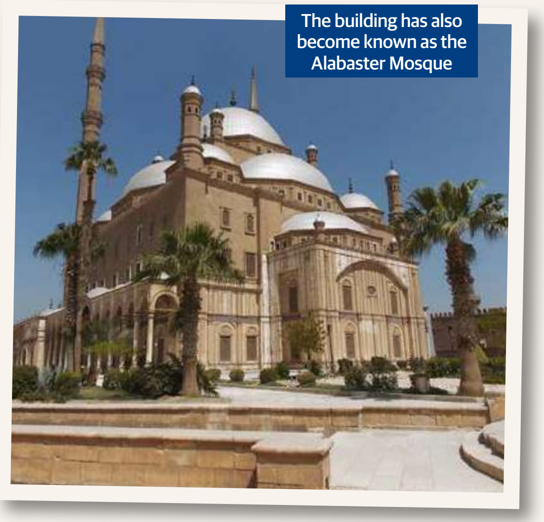
CAIRO

Although not built by a sultan, the Mosque of Muhammad Ali in Egypt's capital is no less Ottoman. While Muhammad Ali, an Ottoman commander who became viceroy of Egypt, was trying to act independently of Istanbul in the mid 19th century, his architectural style actually ended up being very similar.

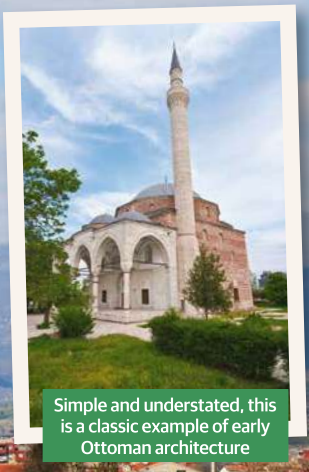
The building took around 18 years to be completed, and it's easy to see why - it's massive. The interior of the mosque measures a staggering 41 metres square, the spaciousness reminiscent of its counterparts back in Istanbul. What is most impressive, however, is the main dome, which reaches 52 metres into the sky, with a diameter no less than 21 metres. That certainly isn't the only dome this mosque boasts, though, with four half-domes and four further smaller domes. These are among the minarets that rise up over 80 metres on bases that are only three metres wide. This mosque also has a courtyard, which houses small arcades sheltered by their own domes.

Inside the mosque is just as grand as outside, with vibrant golds and reds oozing from every corner. Egyptians have taken a lot of pride in this building since its creation in 1830-48, and you certainly can't fault their taste.

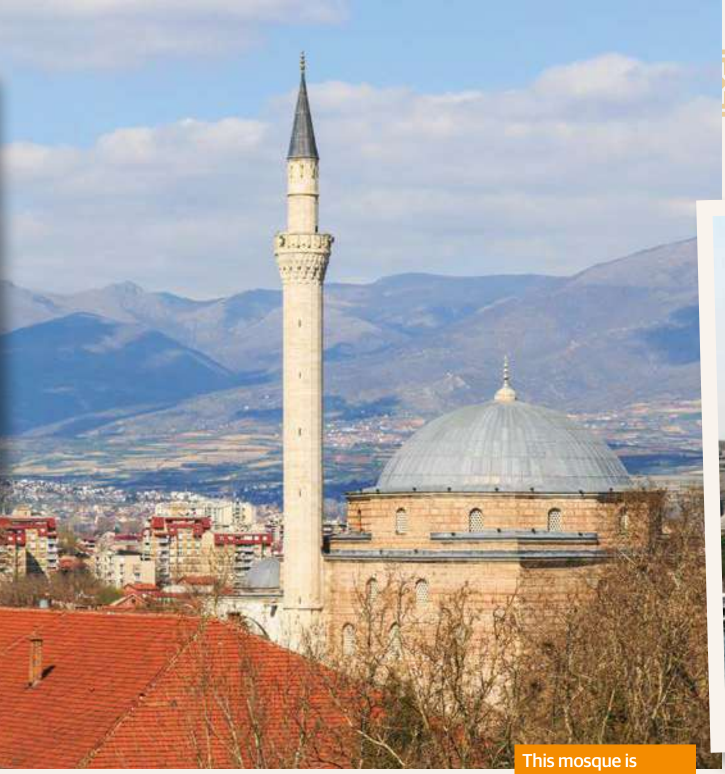
Muhammad Ali Mosque is open daily from 9am to 5pm. Entry is $10



The building has also become known as the Alabaster Mosque



Simple and understated, this is a classic example of early Ottoman architecture



This mosque is easily accessible in Macedonia's capital

3 Mustafa Pasha Mosque

SKOPJE

Nestled between Kale Fortress and the Museum of Macedonia in central Skopje, it's almost impossible to miss the Mustafa Pasha Mosque thanks to its solo minaret, which shoots 47 metres into the sky like an arrow. However, the complex is smaller than it once was - while it used to house a mosque, soup kitchen, school, caravanserai and tomb, only the mosque and tomb remain today.

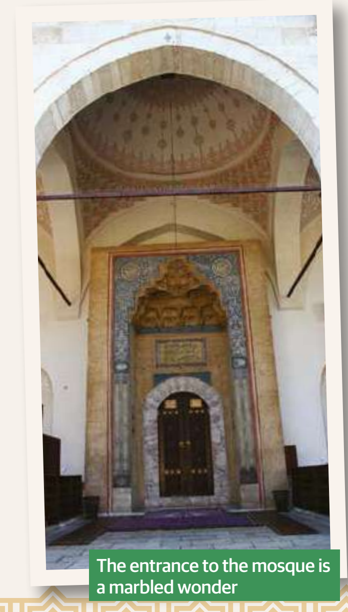
Building ended in 1492 and we know from an inscription above the building's entrance that it was commissioned by Mustafa Pasha, a vizier during the reigns of Bayezid II and Selim I. The tomb actually belongs to Mustafa's daughter Umi. The building itself is a typical piece of early Ottoman architecture with a square base covered by a dome that rests on decorated pillars. Three more small domes shelter the porch of white marble. Inside is relatively plain, with white walls and blue detailing around the windows - it doesn't sound like much, but the way the natural light fills the room is astounding, creating an aura of openness for those who come to this historical mosque to pray.

Open all day except for prayer time, and entry is free. There is no website, but information about travelling in Macedonia can be found at www.exploringmacedonia.com.

◆ ◆ ◆

4 Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque

SARAJEVO

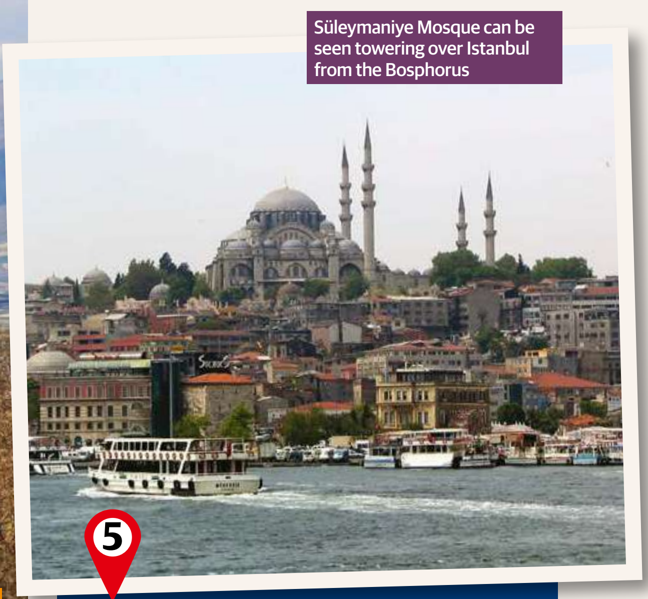


The entrance to the mosque is a marbled wonder

Named after the Ottoman governor of Bosnia who ordered its building, the Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque in Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital is seen as one of the most important Ottoman architectural monuments in the country today. Looking impressive from afar, as you get close you are confronted with marble pillars that create a colonnade before reaching the main entrance, which is decorated with stunning arabesques and gilding. Above the door sits a gold-plated inscription that sings the benefactor's praises: "The mosque of the good people Husrev-bey buildeth in the name of God (as) a home for those who prostrate themselves. He is the destroyer of foe, helper of the champions of faith, Propagator of benefaction, helper of the pious."

It's hard not to be disappointed when you finally step inside. The first thing you'll notice is the space, and that the decoration isn't as elaborate as many other Ottoman mosques. However, there is some exquisite detail on the mihrab, or pulpit, and rugs that have been gifted litter the floor. Whether you're going to pray or visit, there's plenty to marvel at in a building where calls to prayer have been repeated daily since 1531.

The mosque is open Sunday-Saturday 9am-7pm, although it does close for prayers. Tickets cost 2KM (about 89p)



Süleymaniye Mosque can be seen towering over Istanbul from the Bosphorus

5 Süleymaniye Mosque

ISTANBUL

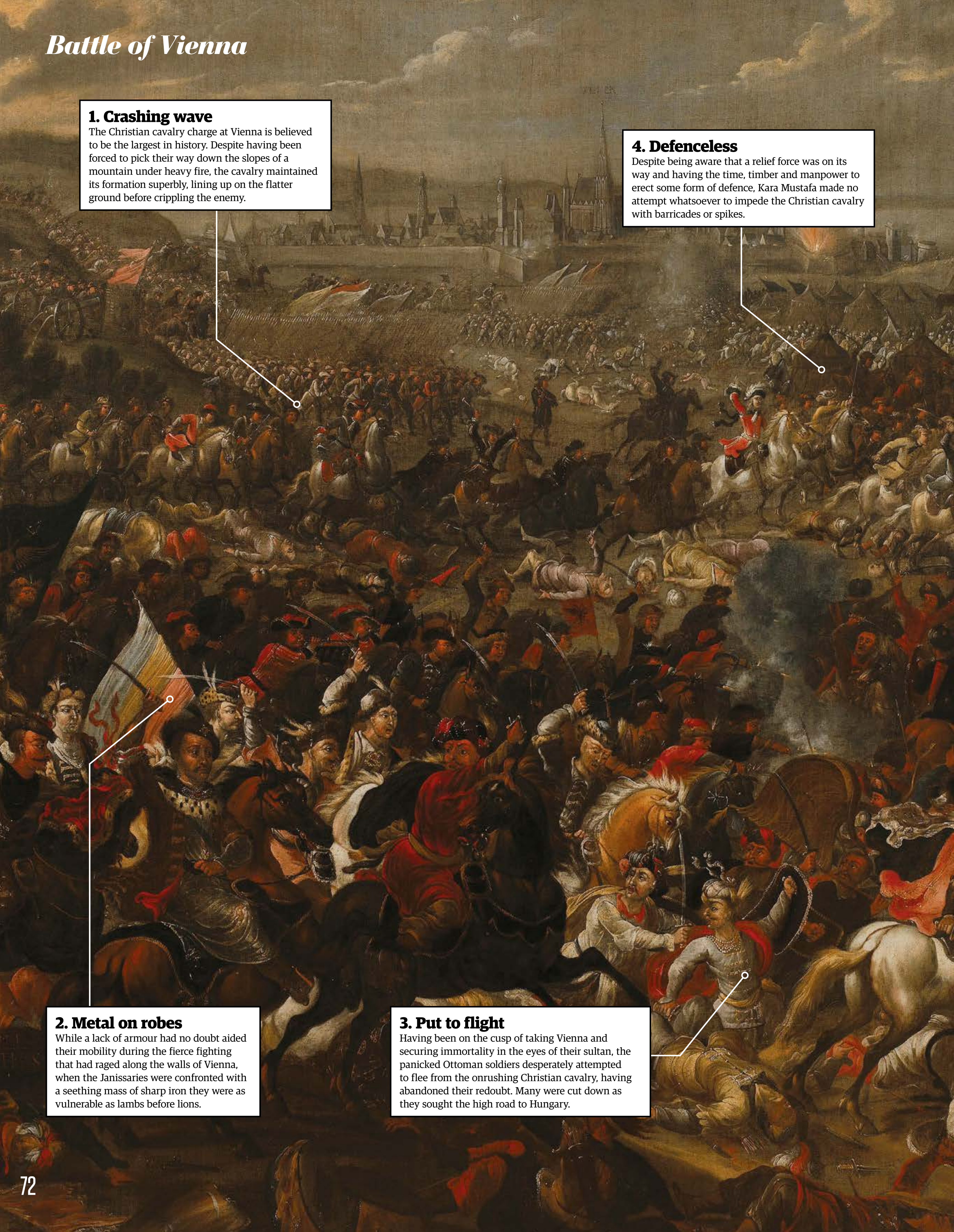
Rest assured, the grandeur of this stunning mosque befits the sultan who commissioned it. Suleiman the Magnificent ordered it to be built in 1550 on the summit of Istanbul's tallest hill - where the first Ottoman palace had sat before - and work finished seven years later. Visible from all around, there's no missing this architectural marvel.

Designed by Mimar Sinan, one of the Ottoman Empire's foremost architects, the complex consists of a fountain, a garden complete with views of the Bosphorus and a school, as well as the main mosque itself. This boasts four minarets that supposedly represent Suleiman being the fourth of the Osmanlı sultans, and the ten balconies on them hint at his position as the tenth sultan of the empire. The courtyard you cross through to reach the mosque itself is a rectangular affair with marble paving slabs - after all, no expense was spared. In the centre you'll find a fountain carved with exquisite detail, and also the tombs of Suleiman and his wife Roxelana.

Inside the mosque is astounding. The big, open space is full of light and the ceiling seems to soar into the heavens, with the intricately decorated domes reaching higher still. Your breath will be taken away as soon as you step foot inside.

The mosque is open every day, 9-11.15am, 12.45-2.15pm and 3.15-4.45pm. However, on Fridays it is also closed between 10.30am and 1.45pm. Entrance is free, but donations are welcomed. You will be asked to remove your shoes, so have socks with you!

© Andrey/flickr, Rev Stan/flickr, Ahmed Ragheb 97, Julian Nitzsche, Burgert Behr, Getty Images



1. Crashing wave

The Christian cavalry charge at Vienna is believed to be the largest in history. Despite having been forced to pick their way down the slopes of a mountain under heavy fire, the cavalry maintained its formation superbly, lining up on the flatter ground before crippling the enemy.

4. Defenceless

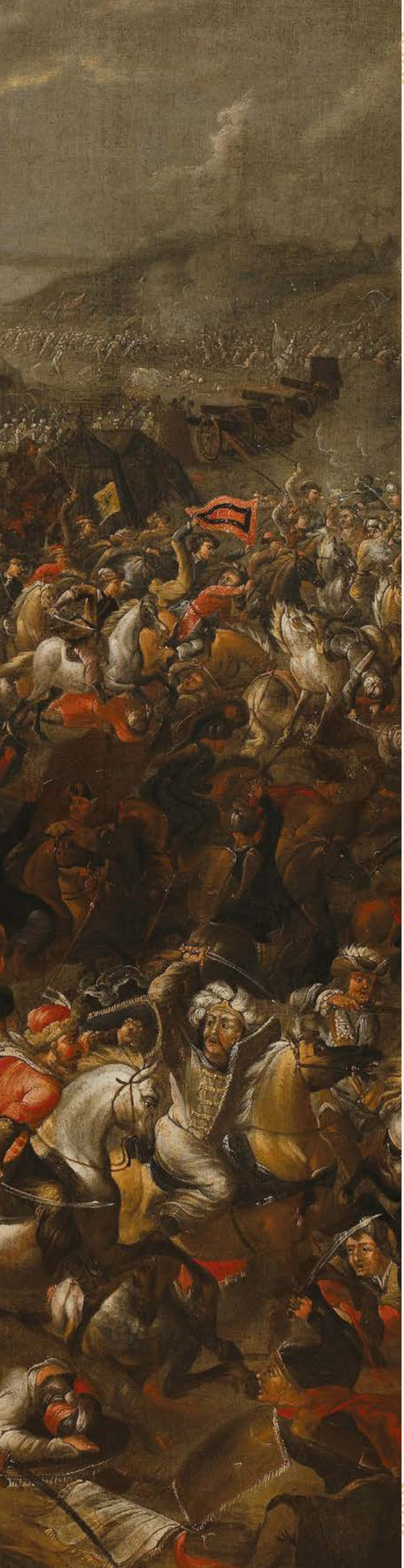
Despite being aware that a relief force was on its way and having the time, timber and manpower to erect some form of defence, Kara Mustafa made no attempt whatsoever to impede the Christian cavalry with barricades or spikes.

2. Metal on robes

While a lack of armour had no doubt aided their mobility during the fierce fighting that had raged along the walls of Vienna, when the Janissaries were confronted with a seething mass of sharp iron they were as vulnerable as lambs before lions.

3. Put to flight

Having been on the cusp of taking Vienna and securing immortality in the eyes of their sultan, the panicked Ottoman soldiers desperately attempted to flee from the onrushing Christian cavalry, having abandoned their redoubt. Many were cut down as they sought the high road to Hungary.



BATTLE OF VIENNA

The Ottomans pulled out all the stops but still failed to capture the coveted city of Vienna

Written by Charlie Ginger

By the summer of 1682 the Ottoman Empire was at its peak. Since its foundation in 1299, it had proved an insatiable predator, consuming territories spanning three continents. Yet one extremely tempting prize had always eluded it: Vienna.

Many sultans had salivated over the prospect of snatching the 'golden apple', yet none had managed to, with Suleiman the Magnificent's failure in 1529 still rankling. Now two men determined to achieve this goal.

Adopted into the royal House of Köprülü as a child, Kara Mustafa, Sultan Mehmed IV's Grand Vizier, was desperate to claim a glorious victory, while the sultan was keen to secure a triumph to rival those of his predecessors, particularly Mehmed II, who had taken Constantinople in 1453.

With this malign plan in place Mustafa embarked on the path to war, and by May 1683 the Ottoman army – numbering 170,000 – was encamped outside the walls of Belgrade, under 400 miles from Habsburg territory.

The coming of this host did not go unnoticed, and panic soon rippled throughout Vienna. While the city would prove a formidable obstacle, its upkeep had been neglected. In fact, so well known were its inadequacies the Ottomans had already identified its weakest point: Emperor Leopold I's palace. As the citizens hurriedly erected a series of spikes and dug numerous ditches to impede the enemy, the owner of this grand building prepared to abandon them, which he did on 7 July.

Exactly one week later the Ottomans arrived, an army of (by now) 140,000 ready to attack a city defended by 15,000. Over the next two months the defenders fought valiantly, but Ottoman sappers gradually undermined the defences. Vienna's capture seemed imminent. But then, salvation arrived.

On the morning of 12 September, a relief army drawn from the corners of the Holy Roman Empire fanned out across the Kahlenburg Mountain overlooking Vienna. Numbering around 40,000, it was led by two hardened warriors: King John III Sobieski of Poland and Charles V, Duke of Lorraine.

Ignoring the siege behind him, Mustafa manoeuvred his army to face them, and it would be his skirmishers who would open fire first. As the initial salvos rang out the army sent to save Vienna advanced. Perhaps overconfident in his troops' ability to hold out in the villages adorning Kahlenburg, Mustafa had made no attempt to defend his encampment.

Having hauled up their guns, Habsburg and Saxon soldiers blasted away at the villages of Nussdorf and Heiligenstadt, taking both before noon. By this stage Mustafa had committed his reserves, and while a brief halt in proceedings brought respite, the Ottomans were soon once again under attack, this time directed at the Türkenschanz (Turk's Redoubt). If this bluff fell, Mustafa's janissaries would have nowhere to go, a thought that undoubtedly occurred to him as 120 Polish hussars smashed into his exposed ranks.

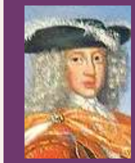
The coup de grâce was not long in coming. With the Ottomans ejected from every stronghold, Sobieski readied his riders. At 6.00 pm his force of 9,000 horsemen rushed the Ottoman camp, slamming their lances into a crush of bodies.

In the chaos that ensued the Ottomans not only lost Vienna – they also suffered a fatal blow to their ambitions. With the capital of the empire secured, the Christian warriors would soon invade Hungary. Kahlenburg would prove to be the graveyard of Ottoman dreams.

HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

TROOPS: 20,000

CAVALRY: 20,000



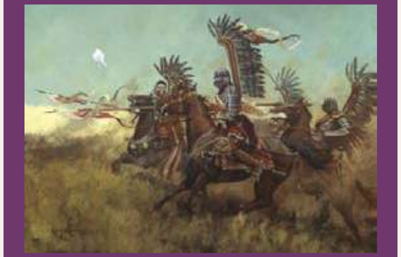
CHARLES V, DUKE OF LORRAINE

LEADER

Experienced in battle, this courageous Austrian statesman convinced the relief army to take the shortest route and devised the approach to battle.

STRENGTHS: Took the initiative and lead his troops over difficult terrain to secure the high ground above the Ottoman encampment.

WEAKNESSES: Misled by old maps, Lorraine risked breaking up his forces as they forded rivers and navigated treacherous vineyards en route to the outskirts of Vienna.



POLISH HUSSARS

KEY UNIT

The fabled 'winged' hussars of the Polish cavalry were an elite shock force built to charge the enemy and pave the way for their comrades to sweep in behind and finish the job.

STRENGTHS: These heavily armoured riders were utterly devastating against infantry and cavalry alike, smashing into the enemy en masse like a wave of human missiles.

WEAKNESSES: Despite their armour, the hussars were extremely vulnerable when faced with concentrated enemy gunfire.

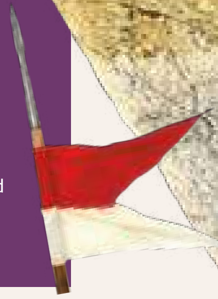
KOPIA

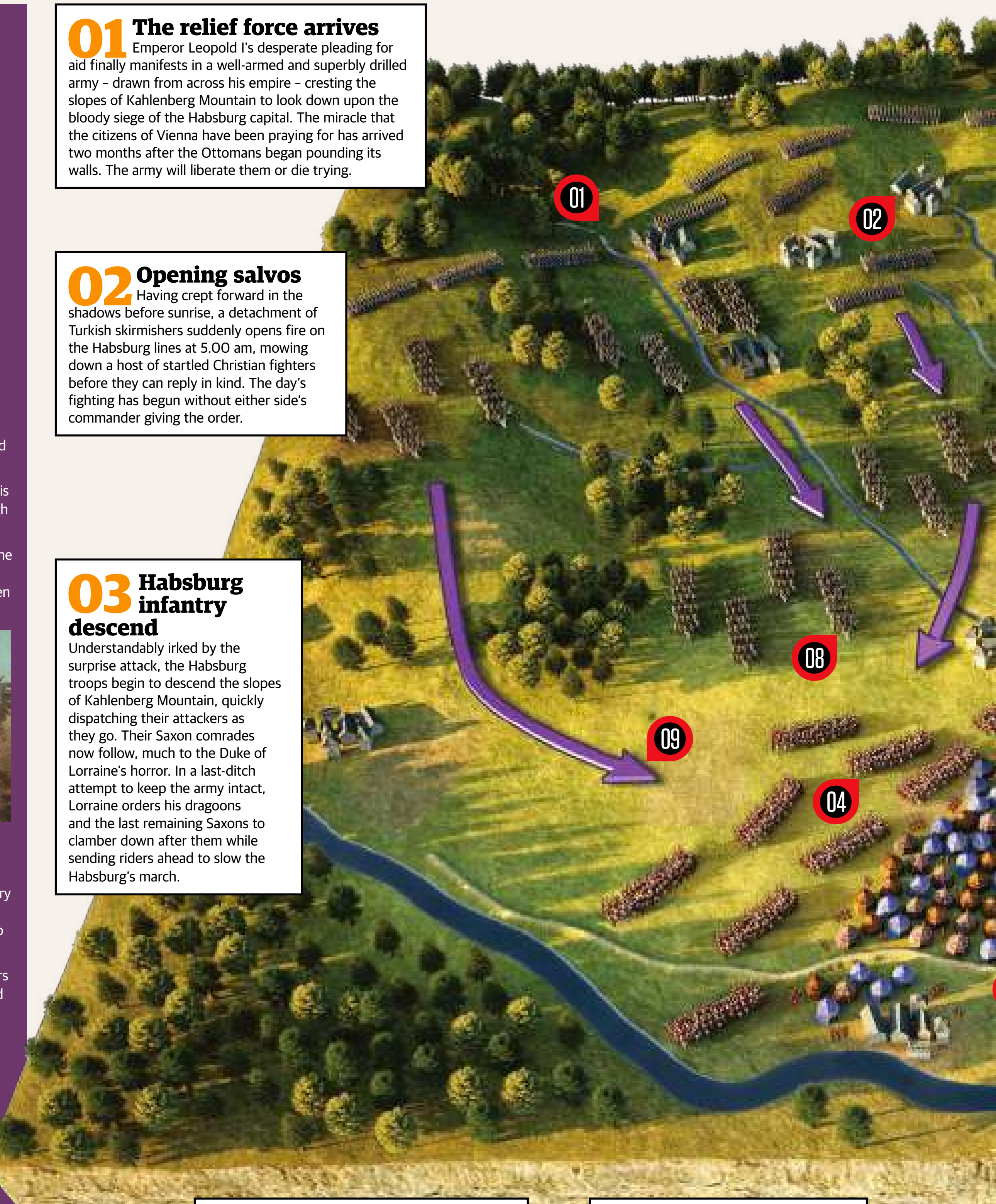
KEY WEAPON

Draped with a silk banner, this 16-foot lance had an iron point, with metal strips layered below it to support the head and protect the top.

STRENGTHS: In the steady hands of a hussar this lance was an unstoppable length of razor-sharp metal, capable of dealing a swift and fatal blow.

WEAKNESSES: This heavy pole would have been little use in a close-quarters fight as it was designed to ram into the enemy at speed while mounted.





01 The relief force arrives

Emperor Leopold I's desperate pleading for aid finally manifests in a well-armed and superbly drilled army – drawn from across his empire – cresting the slopes of Kahlenberg Mountain to look down upon the bloody siege of the Habsburg capital. The miracle that the citizens of Vienna have been praying for has arrived two months after the Ottomans began pounding its walls. The army will liberate them or die trying.

02 Opening salvos

Having crept forward in the shadows before sunrise, a detachment of Turkish skirmishers suddenly opens fire on the Habsburg lines at 5.00 am, mowing down a host of startled Christian fighters before they can reply in kind. The day's fighting has begun without either side's commander giving the order.

03 Habsburg infantry descend

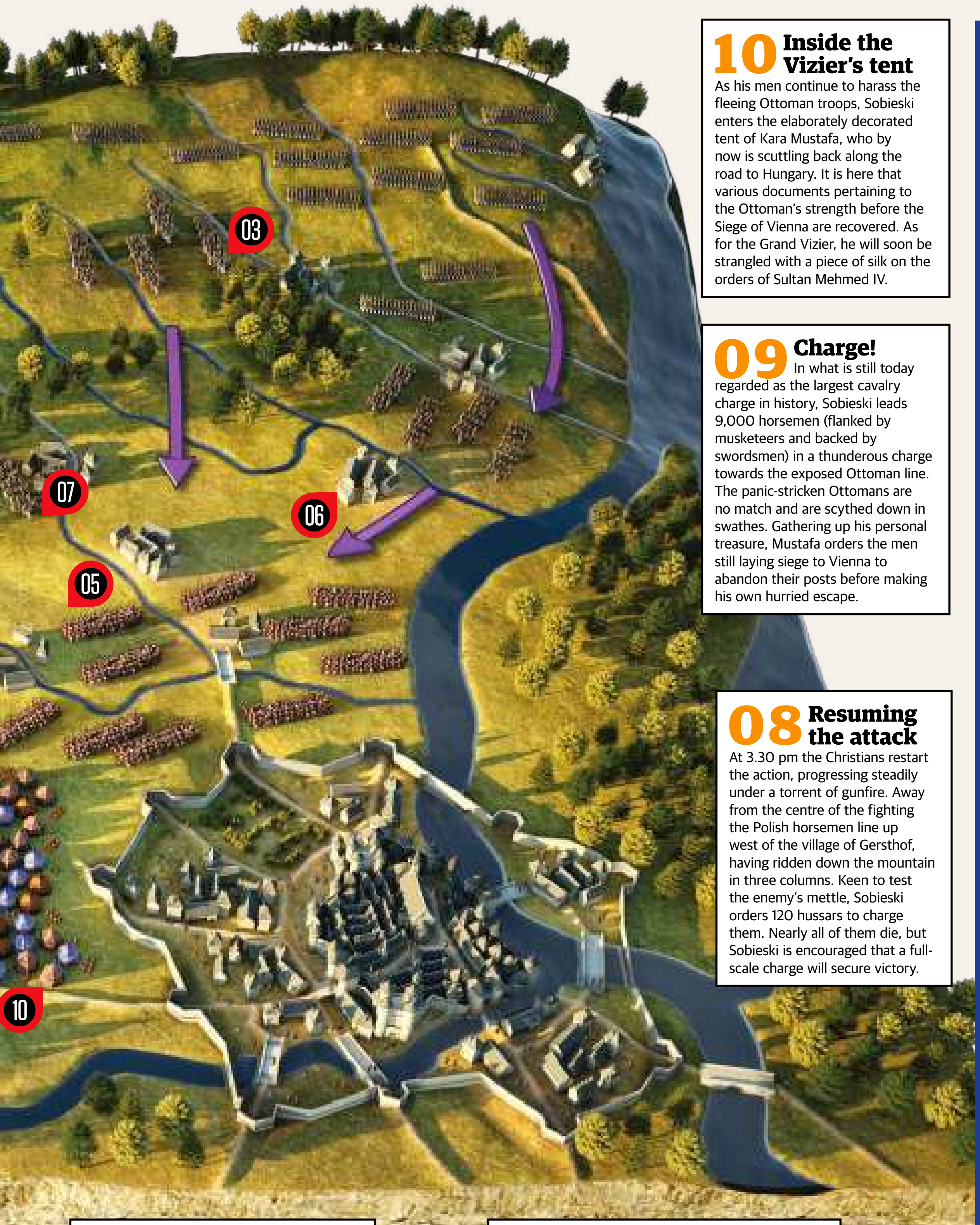
Understandably irked by the surprise attack, the Habsburg troops begin to descend the slopes of Kahlenberg Mountain, quickly dispatching their attackers as they go. Their Saxon comrades now follow, much to the Duke of Lorraine's horror. In a last-ditch attempt to keep the army intact, Lorraine orders his dragoons and the last remaining Saxons to clamber down after them while sending riders ahead to slow the Habsburg's march.

04 The Vizier plays his hand

With the Saxons concentrating their fire on the village of Nussdorf as their infantry closes on the Turkish defenders, Kara Mustafa decides the critical moment has come. At around 10.00 am he orders his bodyguards and household troops to advance to a steep crest known as the Türkenschanz (Turk's Redoubt).

05 Cometh the king

Sobieski now prepares to send his cavalry into the fray. Meanwhile, Lorraine urges his men towards the Türkenschanz, where Mustafa has planted the Standard of the Prophet in a bid to rally his men.



06 A foothold

After hours of bitter fighting the Habsburgs finally take the heavily defended village of Nussdorf. Their Saxon allies soon follow suit, ejecting the Turkish from the nearby settlement of Heiligenstadt.

07 Halt!

With two villages secured and aware that his men are struggling to maintain their gradual advance on empty stomachs and weary feet, Lorraine commands the Christian army to stop some time just after noon. An eerie silence descends over the battlefield as both sides halt beneath the beating sun.

08 Resuming the attack

At 3.30 pm the Christians restart the action, progressing steadily under a torrent of gunfire. Away from the centre of the fighting the Polish horsemen line up west of the village of Gersthof, having ridden down the mountain in three columns. Keen to test the enemy's mettle, Sobieski orders 120 hussars to charge them. Nearly all of them die, but Sobieski is encouraged that a full-scale charge will secure victory.

09 Charge!

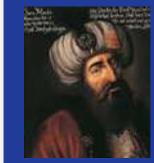
In what is still today regarded as the largest cavalry charge in history, Sobieski leads 9,000 horsemen (flanked by musketeers and backed by swordsmen) in a thunderous charge towards the exposed Ottoman line. The panic-stricken Ottomans are no match and are scythed down in swathes. Gathering up his personal treasure, Mustafa orders the men still laying siege to Vienna to abandon their posts before making his own hurried escape.

10 Inside the Vizier's tent

As his men continue to harass the fleeing Ottoman troops, Sobieski enters the elaborately decorated tent of Kara Mustafa, who by now is scuttling back along the road to Hungary. It is here that various documents pertaining to the Ottoman's strength before the Siege of Vienna are recovered. As for the Grand Vizier, he will soon be strangled with a piece of silk on the orders of Sultan Mehmed IV.

OTTOMANS

TROOPS:
137,000 approx.
CANNON: 300

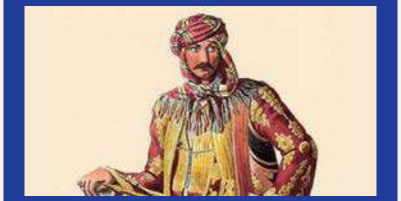


GRAND VIZIER KARA MUSTAFA
LEADER

Adopted into the family of Sultan Mehmed IV as a child, the loyal Mustafa was hell-bent on plucking the 'golden apple' of the Habsburg capital for his ruler.

STRENGTHS: Ruthlessly ambitious and absolutely dedicated to his cause, Mustafa had systematically ground the defences of Vienna down over two months.

WEAKNESSES: Grossly underestimated his enemy, turning his back on the fight below Vienna's walls to face the relief army without making any effort to defend his position.



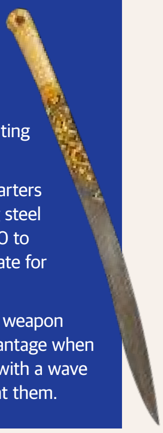
JANISSARIES
KEY UNIT

Formed into ortas (battalions) of 300 men, these superbly trained soldiers would have been forcibly recruited as children. Each man was tattooed with the number of his unit and entitled to a salary for life.

STRENGTHS: Often equipped with a rifle that outranged those used by the enemy, janissaries were deadly sharpshooters and the pride of any Ottoman army.

WEAKNESSES: Clad in robes and felts, these dedicated troops stood little chance against a well-protected adversary. On top of this, Janissaries were notorious for refusing to follow orders they didn't agree with.

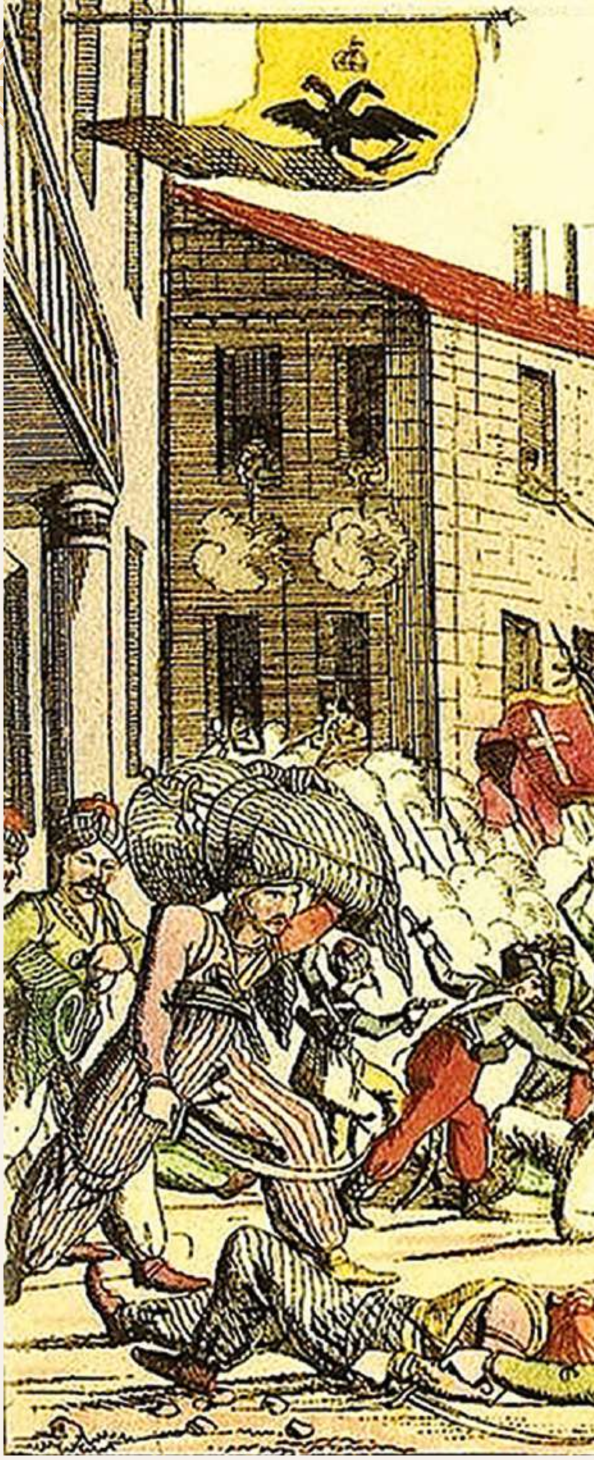
YATAGAN
KEY WEAPON



This curved sword was the signature weapon of a Janissary and proved to be an effective weapon in the hand-to-hand fighting that the Ottomans specialised in.

STRENGTHS: Ideal for close quarters combat, the length of this strong steel short sword would range from 60 to 80 centimetres, perfectly adequate for eviscerating enemy soldiers.

WEAKNESSES: The size of this weapon would have been a major disadvantage when the Janissaries were confronted with a wave of cavalry aiming 16-foot lances at them.



RISING NATIONALISM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

How a growing patriotic feeling in Greece sowed the seeds for the Ottoman Empire's downfall

Written by Jem Duducu

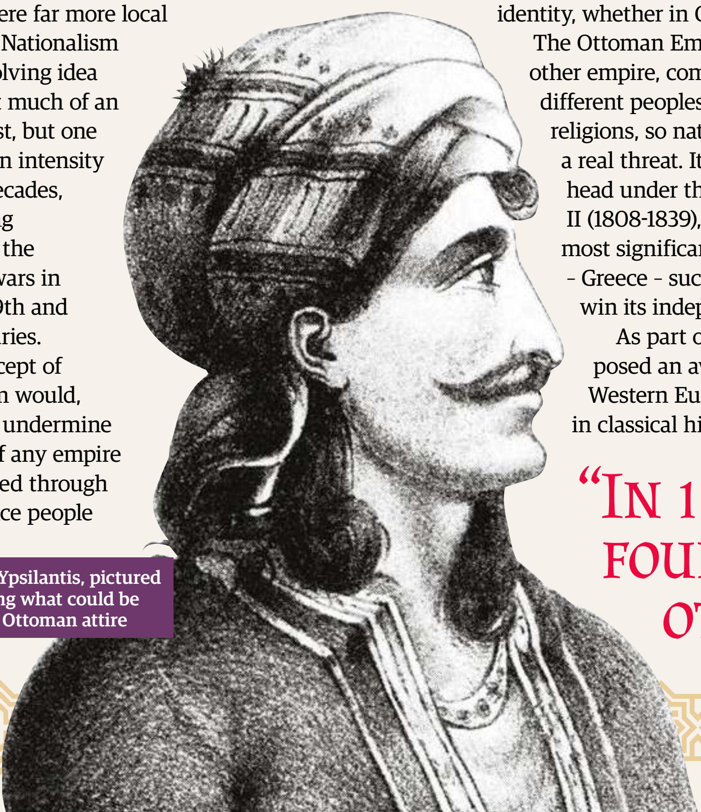
I was in the early 1700s that the vanguard of nationalism first appeared on the world stage. Prior to this, people from the town of York, for instance, would see themselves as just that - or perhaps as a Yorkshireman. Yes, they may technically have been 'English', but the idea of a whole country was far too vast for the average peasant in 1700. Connections, in short, were far more local back then. Nationalism was an evolving idea that wasn't much of an issue at first, but one that grew in intensity over the decades, culminating in some of the bloodiest wars in both the 19th and 20th centuries.

The concept of nationalism would, ultimately, undermine the basis of any empire that's existed through history. Once people start to see a unity in ethnicity, rather than in the artificial construct of empire, the empire is bound to fracture. An example of this change in ideas can be seen in the American Revolutionary War, which was initially about the legitimacy of rule and the right to raise taxes rather than about creating a separate nation. Yet, a few generations later, almost all revolutions were about national identity, whether in Greece or Bolivia.

The Ottoman Empire was, like any other empire, composed of many different peoples, languages and religions, so nationalism posed a real threat. It came to a bloody head under the rule of Mahmud II (1808-1839), seeing one of the most significant parts of its empire - Greece - successfully struggle to win its independence.

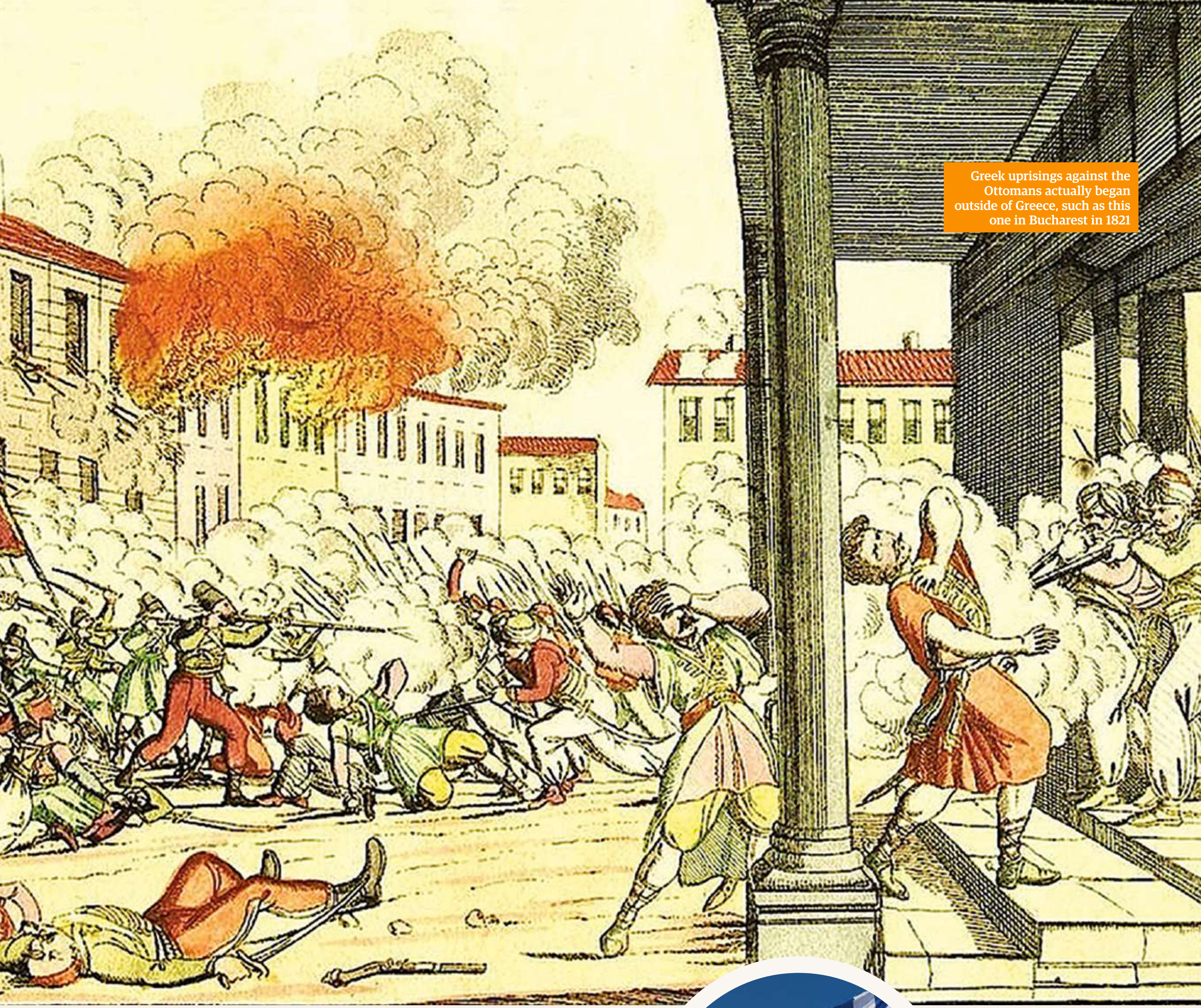
As part of the empire, Greece posed an awkward problem. Western Europeans well-versed in classical history may well have wondered, if Ancient Greece was the starting point of western culture, why was it not under the control of one of the great western powers? Why was it in the hands of decadent and corrupt Muslim sultans? This was an idea that grew in the West, while the idea of independence began to take hold in Greek-speaking areas of the Empire.

In 1814, Filiki Eteria, the 'Society of Friends', was founded in Odessa (Russian territory at this time, now in Ukraine) along the same lines as the Freemasons, but instead of brotherhood, this secret society was dedicated to the overthrow of Ottoman rule. Within five years its message had



Alexander Ypsilantis, pictured here wearing what could be considered Ottoman attire

> "In 1814, a secret society was founded to overthrow the Ottoman rule"



Greek uprisings against the Ottomans actually began outside of Greece, such as this one in Bucharest in 1821

spread like wildfire until there was an extensive secret network of associated organisations not only in Greece itself, but in virtually every Greek community in Europe – both in and outside of the Ottoman Empire.

When there had been rebellions by Greeks in the past, the Ottomans had simply allowed hostile bandits from their neighbour, Albania, to descend on Greek towns and cause enough chaos for the rebels to put down their arms. The Ottomans didn't have to raise a formal army to suppress the unrest, and the Albanians could return home with carts groaning under the weight of their plunder. It was a win for everyone, except the Greeks.

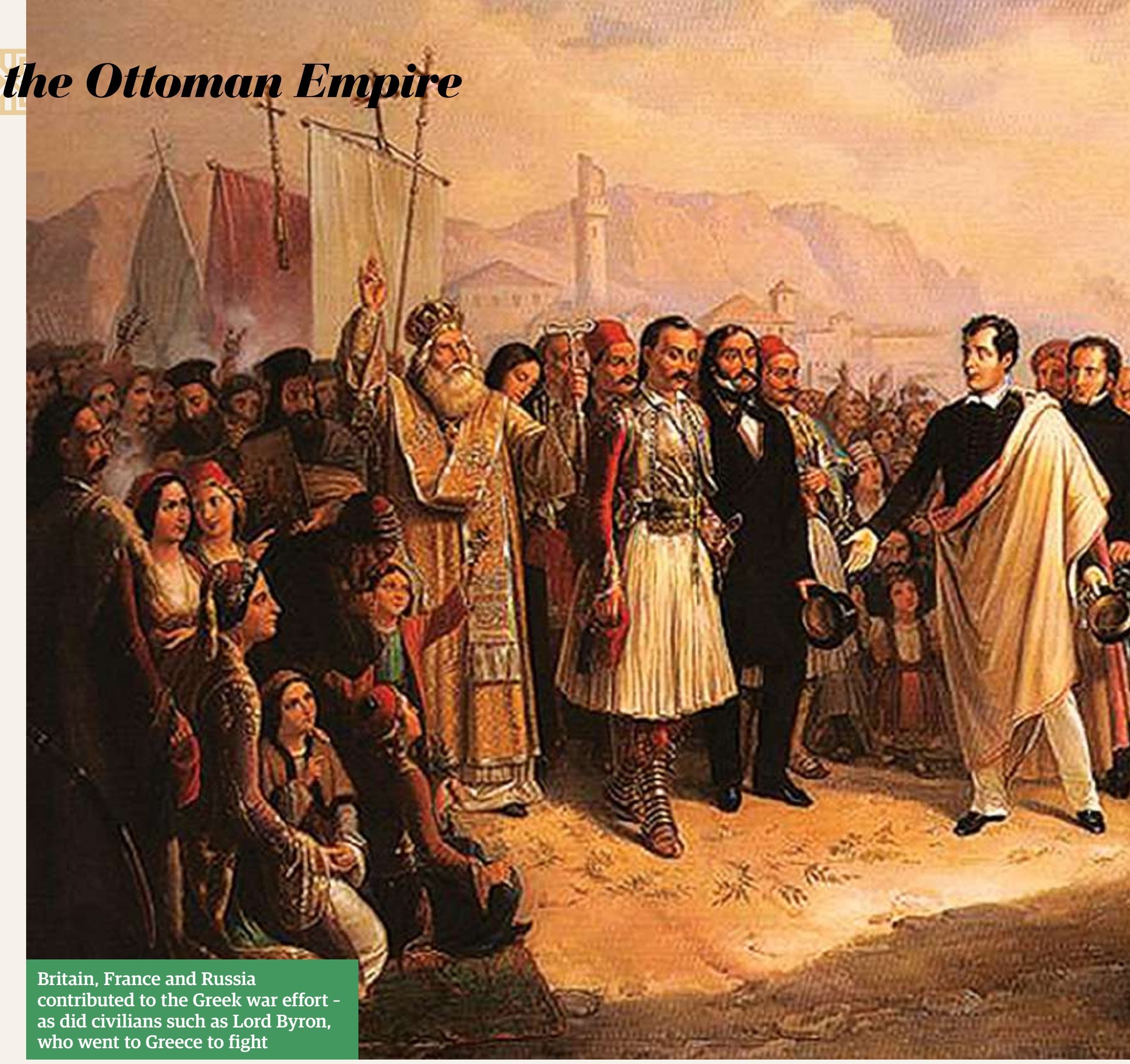
Albania wasn't a very powerful country and if a few bands of rough-and-ready outlaws could keep the Greek rebels in check, it shows how badly the Greek freedom fighters needed outside assistance. As in the case of the American War of Independence, during the Greek War of Independence, there was a remarkable number of foreign troops (and, critically, equipment and weapons) floating around to help the cause.

When the Russians started to back the Greek rebels, their role evolved into not-so-secret backing with their navy, which led to a separate but simultaneous war with Mahmud II – on top of his raging conflict with Persia and the increasingly serious uprising in Greece. Mahmud II had a lot on his hands, but he had some help from the semi-autonomous areas of North Africa, including that of Muhammad Ali of Egypt. The Greeks, by comparison, had formal help from France and Britain as well as Russia, plus volunteers and funds from various groups in other countries.

So, Mahmud II had less of everything, and his allies were mere minnows compared to the mighty empires that backed Greece.

Alexander Ypsilantis is seen as one of the key Greek revolutionary leaders (and there are a lot of them), but he is an example of the complexities behind the supposedly simple idea of 'Greece for the Greeks'. While there is no doubt that he had Greek ancestry, he also had Wallachian (Romanian) aristocratic blood, had spent most of his life in Russia and had started his military career in Russia fighting for the Russians against Napoleon.

The Greek flag's nine stripes each represent a syllable of 'Eleftheria i thanatos' – 'freedom or death'



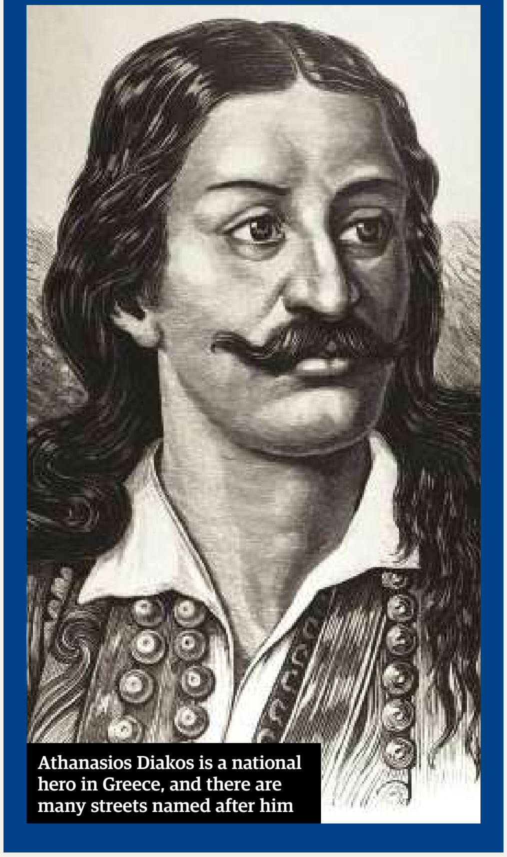
Britain, France and Russia contributed to the Greek war effort – as did civilians such as Lord Byron, who went to Greece to fight

FREEDOM OR DEATH

The bloody backstory to Greece's national anthem

The Battle of Alamana centres on the legendary freedom fighter Athanasios Diakos, who made the fundamental error of splitting his forces. For every occasion this works, it fails another ten times, and it needs a general the calibre of Napoleon or Julius Caesar to carry it off. Diakos was no such general and Ottoman commander Omer Vrioni used his overwhelming force to attack each of the three sections of Greek rebels in turn. The Greeks routed and left Diakos with about 50 men to defend a strategic bridge. Diakos refused to retreat, intending to fight to the last man and die in battle. As his line was overwhelmed in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, his sword broke and he was captured alive. Vrioni (unusually) offered clemency and made him an offer to join his forces as an officer. Diakos's response has become virtually a Greek motto: "I was born a Greek and I will die a Greek."

Vrioni had him impaled, a horrific form of Medieval execution, which was abhorrent in the Middle Ages and was even more so in 1821. Diakos was still slowly dying the next day when a comrade-in-arms arrived and shot him to put him out of his misery. Diakos is, understandably, considered to be one of the great martyrs of the Greek independence movement, and the Greek flag echoes the impassioned rhetoric of the era. The number of stripes on the flag is the same as the number of syllables in the phrase 'Freedom or Death' (Ελευθερία ή θάνατος, pronounced 'Eleftheria i thanatos', in Greek), so the national flag of Greece is a literal declaration of independence.



Athanasios Diakos is a national hero in Greece, and there are many streets named after him

The Ancient Spartans certainly wouldn't have recognised him as a fellow Greek.

What Ypsilantis illustrated was the reality, the cosmopolitan nature, of the Ottoman Empire, but that didn't matter. He felt 100 per cent Greek, had important political connections with the Russian court (which would come in handy in attracting support), was one of the founders of Filiki Eteria and was, of course, a battle-hardened veteran. He was exactly the person Greece needed to spark the tinderbox.

Interestingly, for a 'Greek' war of independence, Ypsilantis ignited things in 1821 in Moldavia. He realised quickly that while ethnic Greeks wanted to support the cause, they were not the majority in that area; there wasn't enough of a groundswell of local support to embed the insurrection, so the uprising in Moldavia came to nothing. Moldavian independence would have to wait.

The early years of these uprisings were brutally suppressed by the Ottomans under Mahmud II. Areas that saw rebellion could expect Ottoman troops and irregular forces of loyal Albanians and Kurds to arrive and swiftly massacre local populations. Churches were desecrated and, while this may have been an acceptable tactic in the 15th century, it wasn't in the 19th century and only served to confirm to the West how barbaric the 'Turks' (and anyone else who wasn't Western European) were. Such actions made the Ottoman Empire a pariah state.

Nationalism was often a matter of the heart rather than the head. Take, for example, Greek freedom fighter and national martyr Hatzimichalis Dalianis. There can be no doubt that he was a loyal supporter of the cause for freedom, and to this day he's seen as a revolutionary martyr in Greece. But here's the thing: he's always pictured wearing a turban and looking suspiciously like an Ottoman general. His clothing is neither Western nor a throwback to the Greece of the Byzantine Empire or the Hellenic era. Even his name, Hatzimichalis, has Arabic origins – the prefix 'Hajji' means 'one who has completed a pilgrimage' (in the case of Christianity, to Jerusalem). It's an inadvertent reminder of how generally diverse the Ottoman Empire was. This shows that even the Greeks fighting for independence didn't really know what it meant to be 'Greek' – aside from their language, religion and not being 'Turkish'. It is worth stating that at this time there was no concept of a 'Turkish' nationality.

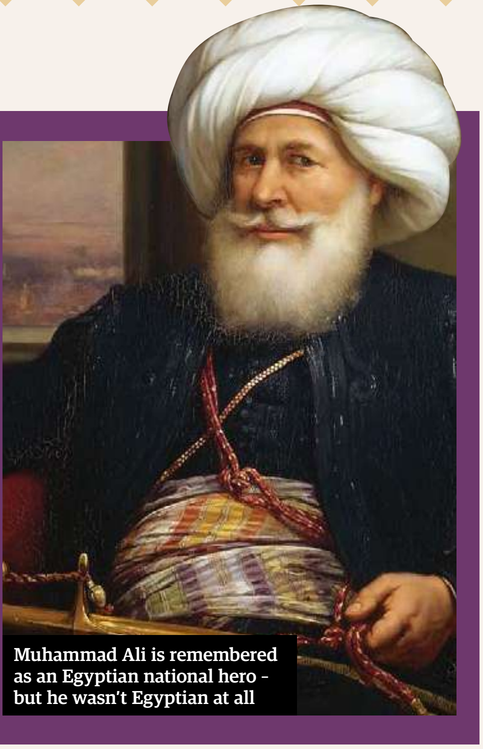
> "THREE-QUARTERS OF THE 120,000 PEOPLE ON CHIOS EITHER DIED OR WERE TAKEN INTO SLAVERY. THIS WAS A WAR CRIME"

MUHAMMAD ALI PASHA OF EGYPT

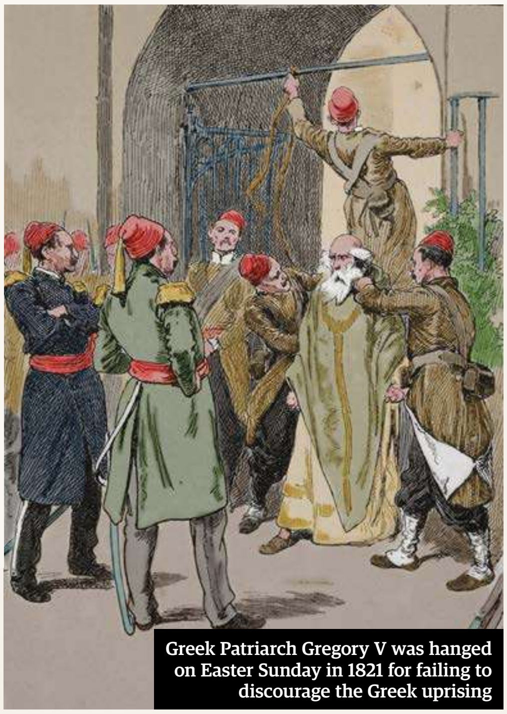
Muhammad Ali ruled Egypt almost independently and was nominally a subject of the Ottoman Empire, but having said that, he is in some way a microcosm of the difficulties the Ottoman Empire faced.

He was born in what we would now call Greece, to a family of Albanian ancestry. He did well as a tax collector in Greece, which brought him to prominence. He would likely never have gone to Egypt had it not been for Napoleon's invasion and subsequent retreat from the region. The lands were returned to the Ottoman state and Muhammad Ali was one of a large number of what amounted to Albanian mercenaries sent there.

In the ensuing years, Muhammad Ali played the returning Ottoman power off against the residual local Mamluk (Egypt's former rulers) support so that by 1811 he had become de facto leader. The ancient Mamluk influence and the powerful yet distant Ottoman court had been thwarted by an ambitious tax collector. The irony is Muhammad Ali had not been born or raised in Egypt, and yet today he is forever associated with it.



Muhammad Ali is remembered as an Egyptian national hero – but he wasn't Egyptian at all



Greek Patriarch Gregory V was hanged on Easter Sunday in 1821 for failing to discourage the Greek uprising

Perhaps the most appalling event happened a year into the war on the island of Chios when, in 1822, the Ottoman garrison killed at least 50,000 of the island's population. It is estimated that three-quarters of the 120,000 people on the island either died or were taken into slavery. By any measure, this was a war crime.

However, the response from the Greek rebels was hardly any better. Morea, an area that had been fought over on many occasions, was the first area of Greek territory to rebel. The locals sided with the Greek cause, meaning that the Ottoman forces rapidly lost the countryside and had to retreat to their forts. The forts leading up to the capital of Tripolitsa (also called 'Greek Tripoli'), where most of the Muslims and the main Ottoman garrison had found refuge, were attacked in turn. When that fell, the Greeks poured in, plundered the city and carried out their own massacre. Although most Western sources refer to this as "mob violence" or say that "the Greeks ran riot" as if nobody was hurt, it denies the reality of what took place. It's as if use of the word 'massacre' would taint the narrative of the Greek David fighting off an Ottoman Goliath.

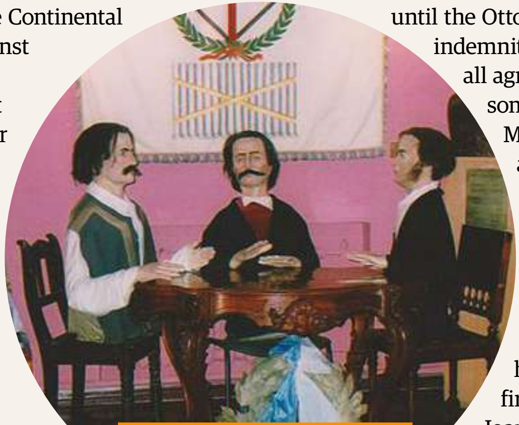
But it wasn't only a battle between Christians and Muslims. It should be noted that the Jews in the so-called 'liberated' areas of Greece were either exiled or massacred. This could be because they tended to live in areas where there were Muslims, and were killed as part of a general massacre, but Judaism played no part in the reforming of a Christian Greek society, so their persecution could have been anti-Semitic in nature.

Unbelievably, in the middle of fighting for freedom from the 'Turks', the various rebel groups began fighting a civil war. The sides could be roughly split between the Continental Greeks and islanders against the Peloponnesians. The war rumbled on for about a year, showing the power not only of old rivalries, but of petty politics – while the new Greek government was still fighting a war with the old enemy, it was also fighting with other Greeks.

Meanwhile, Mahmud II managed to keep an army of 40,000 Egyptian troops in the Peloponnese, led by Muhammad Ali's son. It was at this point that Mahmud II played a card rarely used by the Ottoman sultans: he declared a jihad. But following the Battle of Navarino in 1827, peace terms stated that the 40,000-strong army should go back to Egypt, which left the autonomous Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali in a bind – should he follow the agreement and succumb to the realities of the situation? If he did so, it would mean that he was a Muslim ruler ignoring the caliph's call to jihad and, at the same time, that he was leaving his son with no choice but an ignominious retreat.

When those involved had exhausted themselves with blood and battle, many were ready to sign treaties. Under 1829's Treaty of Adrianople, parts of Armenia and Serbia achieved autonomy. It gave Russia most of the eastern and western shores of the Black Sea, including the strategically important mouth of the Danube. Russia continued to occupy Moldavia and Wallachia and to spread its influence ever closer to the Ottoman capital, in essence holding these territories to ransom until the Ottomans paid a huge indemnity to free them. This was all agreed in 1829 and took some of the pressure from Mahmud II, but any official agreement with Greece had yet to be ratified.

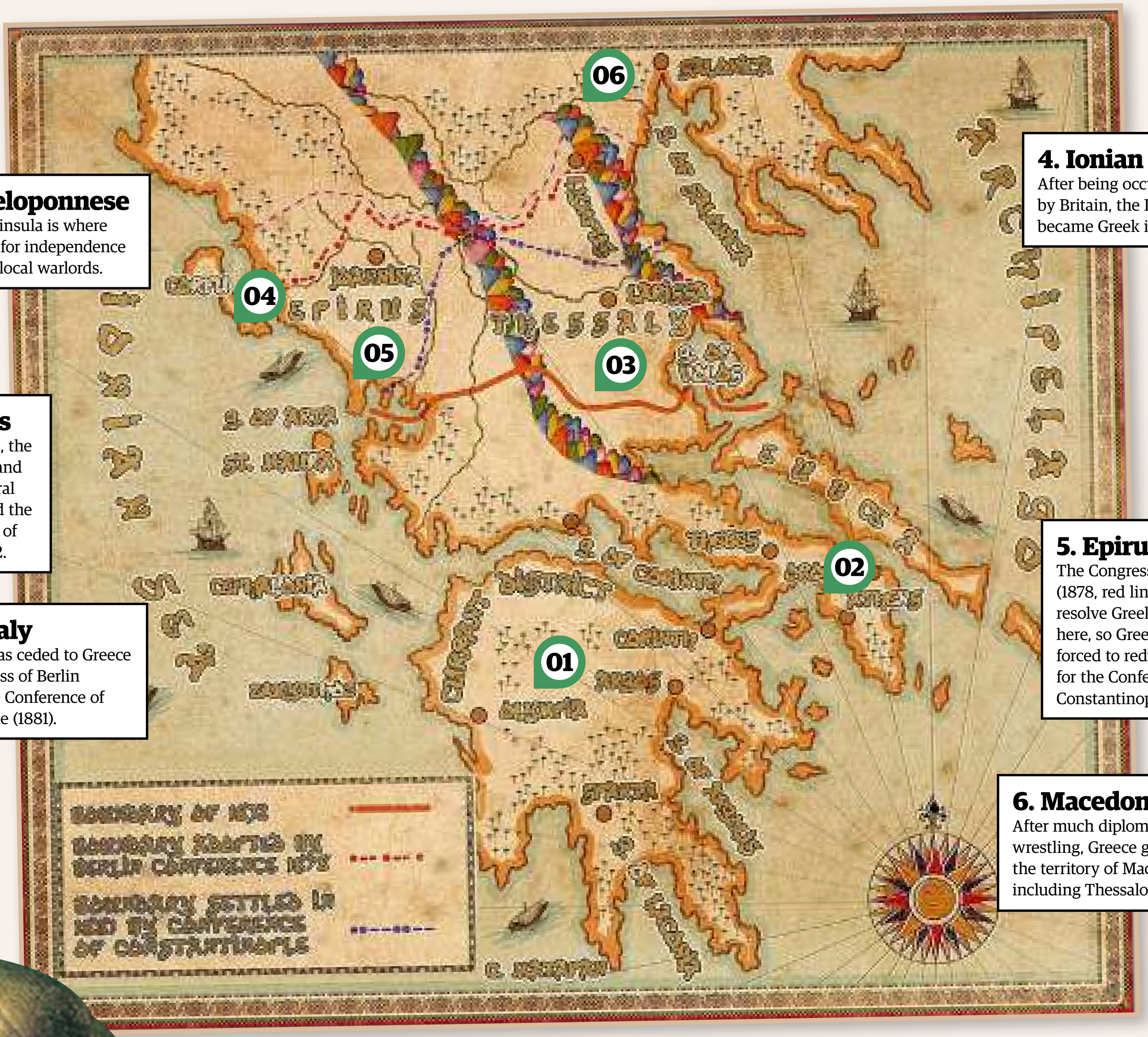
When the fighting ended in 1829, Greece did not become a newfound paradise just because the 'Turks' had been ejected. The first head of state, Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, lasted only a few years before being assassinated not by 'Turks', but by disgruntled Greeks with



Filiki Eteria is so important to Greeks that a modest museum exists in Odessa to show how the organisation first formed

GREECE'S PATH TO INDEPENDENCE

The slow road to freedom


06
04
05
03
02
01
EPIRUS
THESSALY
ARCHIPELAGO
Boundary of 1832
Boundary drafted by Berlin Conference 1878
Boundary settled in 1881 by Conference of Constantinople

1. The Peloponnese
This wild peninsula is where Greece's fight for independence began, led by local warlords.

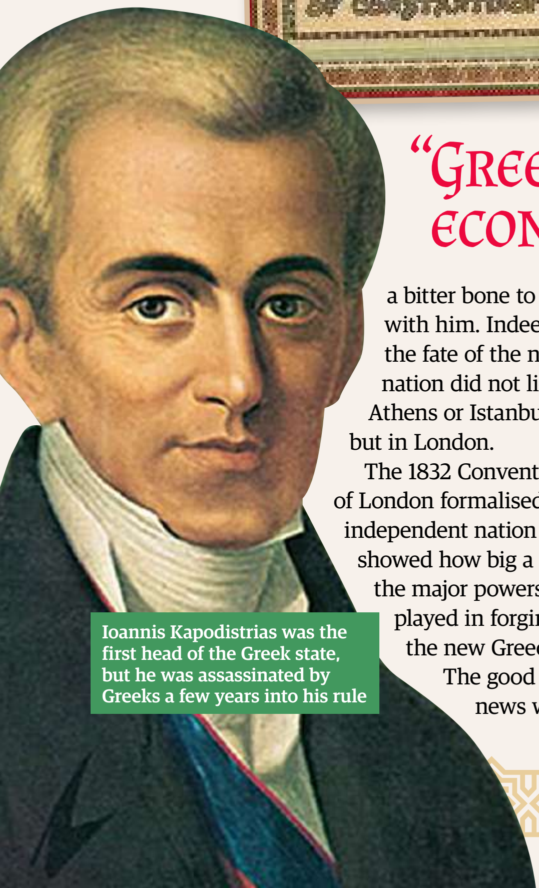
2. Athens
Athens, Attica, the Peloponnese and much of Central Greece formed the first Kingdom of Greece in 1832.

3. Thessaly
This region was ceded to Greece by the Congress of Berlin (1878) and the Conference of Constantinople (1881).

4. Ionian Islands
After being occupied briefly by Britain, the Ionian Islands became Greek in 1863.

5. Epirus
The Congress of Berlin (1878, red line) failed to resolve Greek borders here, so Greece was forced to reduce its claims for the Conference of Constantinople (1881).

6. Macedonia
After much diplomatic wrestling, Greece gained the territory of Macedonia, including Thessaloniki, in 1913.



Ioannis Kapodistrias was the first head of the Greek state, but he was assassinated by Greeks a few years into his rule

> "GREECE'S GOVERNMENT SUFFERED GROSS ECONOMIC INCOMPETENCE AND CORRUPTION"

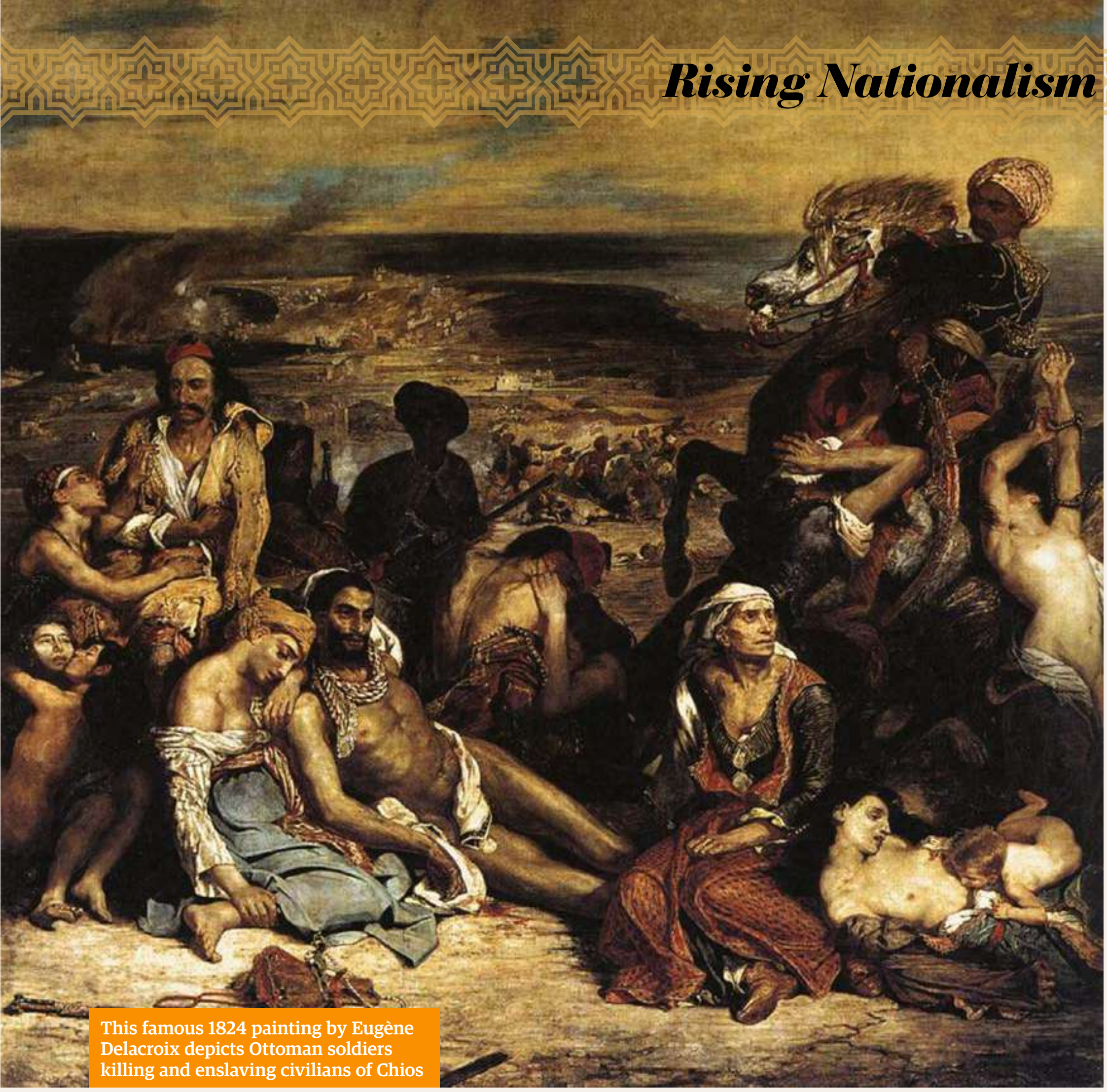
a bitter bone to pick with him. Indeed, the fate of the new nation did not lie in Athens or Istanbul – but in London.

The 1832 Convention of London formalised the independent nation and showed how big a part the major powers played in forging the new Greece.

The good news was that the Greeks got a new king, when the not-at-all-Greek Prince Otto of Bavaria became King Otto of Greece. It was also decided that there should be a formal treaty to end the war and recognise the new state, so the Treaty of Constantinople was drawn up and signed in the Ottoman capital.

However, the new country of Greece was not the country that exists today. It covered the Peloponnese, central Greece (including Athens, though it was more or less a ghost town at this point) and the island of Euboea, as well as most of the islands in the Aegean. The Ionian Islands, Crete, Cyprus and northern Greece (including key areas such as Macedonia and Thessaloniki) were still Ottoman. A great chunk had been torn out of the Ottoman Empire, but it could have been a lot worse for the Ottomans.

Mahmud II's son Abdülmecid had seen what nationalism and popular uprisings could do, and he understood that such moves were detrimental to the empire. Some northern areas of the Balkans were still (technically) Ottoman, but in reality they were all but ruled by Russia, which continued to interfere on matters regarding the rights of Orthodox Christians in the empire and attempted to undermine the sultan's authority at pretty much every turn. The war in Egypt and the minor rebellions across the empire showed the need for a unifying glue to hold the empire together. Sultan Abdülmecid tried to make himself that glue.

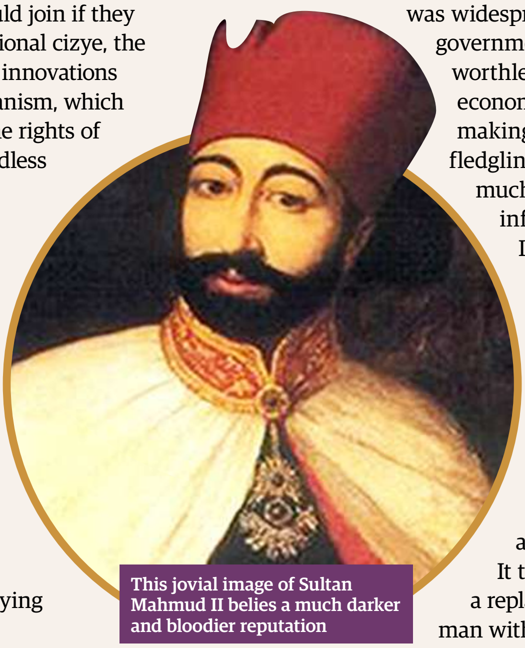


This famous 1824 painting by Eugène Delacroix depicts Ottoman soldiers killing and enslaving civilians of Chios

After the Greek War of Independence, Abdülmecid was painfully aware that what had happened in Greece could happen in Cyprus or Bulgaria, or further afield in Baghdad. The new concept of Ottomanism was a rather shrewd counter to local nationalism, which he introduced by disbanding the centuries-old military wing of the empire, the Janissaries. An army was still needed, and great care was taken to include European Christians in the system, but now they had a choice: they could join if they wanted to or pay the traditional cizye, the tax for non-believers. Such innovations formed the basis of Ottomanism, which theoretically guaranteed the rights of all Ottoman subjects, regardless of religion or ethnicity. It recognised that a system based on choice would be easier to implement and that greater stability and security would follow.

Abdülmecid believed his new idea was a vital response to the issue that, at the start of the 19th century, about 40 per cent of the population of this Islamic empire was Christian. While there was a genuine argument for staying together, it was becoming harder to ignore more clearly defined ethnic and religious identities. Great emphasis was put on how all Ottoman citizens were equal under the law and had equal opportunities, to nip any potential discontent from other corners of the empire in the bud.

In the meantime, Greece was hardly going from strength to strength. The masses, government officials and courtiers all argued about the new constitution. Unfortunately, there was widespread corruption and government bonds became worthless through gross economic incompetence, making it harder for the fledgling state to finance much-needed infrastructure projects. It seemed that no one was happy with King Otto and, when he attempted to become an absolute ruler within the first few years of his rule, the uprising against him forced his abdication in 1862. It took about a year to find a replacement and, again, a man with no Greek blood was chosen: Prince Wilhelm of Denmark became the Greek King George I. George expanded the borders of the Greek nation by bringing the Ionian Islands into the fold, which were a coronation gift from Britain. At a time when Abdülmecid was trying to promote the concept of Ottomanism, the instability and lack of immediate success in independent Greece probably helped his argument.



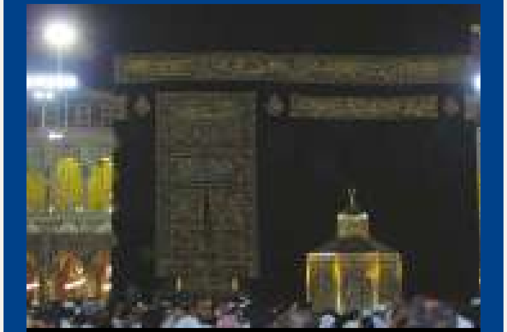
This jovial image of Sultan Mahmud II belies a much darker and bloodier reputation

The inescapable reality was that once the concept of nationalism began to spread, it wrote the obituary of the Ottoman Empire. Rulers in a faraway land had nothing of substance to counter the conviction of locals that they were better off going it alone. Like the rulers of the French and British Empires, the Ottomans recognised the threat and tried to adapt. Unfortunately for them, the tide of history was against them.

RISING RELIGIOSITY

The rise of nationalism partly led to the Ottoman court becoming more Islamic. This may be a strange statement, because the West always saw the Ottomans as the great Muslim threat (something that still echoes today). But the Sublime Porte based in Istanbul did not see it that way. The capital (Constantinople, after 1453) was partly in Europe, and the western powers were far closer to the centre of the empire than eastern provinces such as Iran were. It is worth pointing out that it is a Muslim's sacred duty to go on pilgrimage to Mecca once in their life, if they can afford it, which a sultan obviously could. In the Ottoman Empire, from 1300 to 1922, of the dozens of sultans that ruled over the centuries, none of them went on pilgrimage. Some sultans were obviously more pious than others, but many were concerned about the huge numbers of Christians and Jews in the empire. Indeed, in the late 1400s, the only safe place for Jews in Europe was in the Ottoman Empire.

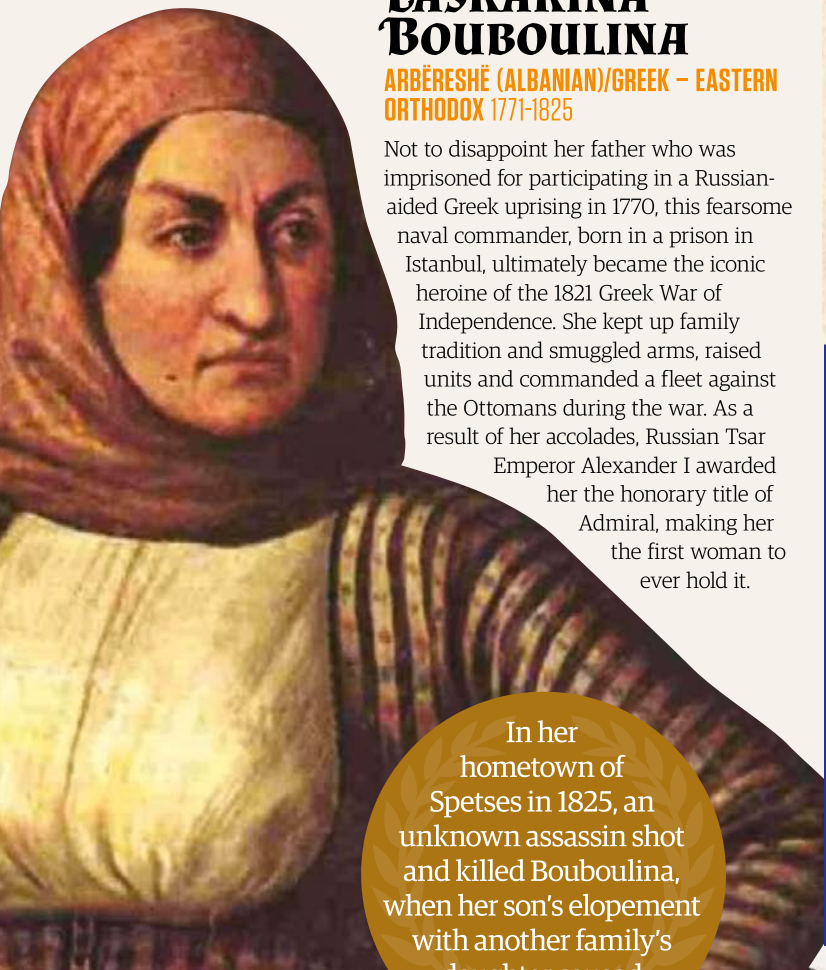
However, with Greece breaking away and all of the Empire's enemies clearly defined on religious grounds (the Crimean War was nominally all about rights of Christians in the Empire), it was easy to make at least some of the glue to hold the fragile empire together one based on faith. By the 1830s it was the only Muslim empire of any size – it ruled the three most important cities in the faith (Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem) and so increasingly you see legislation and proclamations that have a more partisan tone.



The Kaaba in Mecca is the epicentre of the Hajj pilgrimage that all Muslims should undertake at least once in their lifetime

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE'S REBELS

The Empire's reign was as volatile as it was long. Fraught throughout with widespread rebellion, these forces would come to unravel it

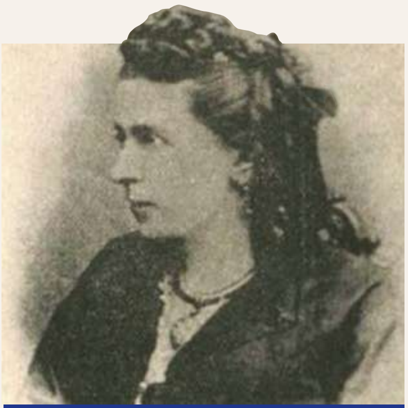


LASKARINA BOUBOULINA

ARBËRESHË (ALBANIAN)/GREEK – EASTERN ORTHODOX 1771-1825

Not to disappoint her father who was imprisoned for participating in a Russian-aided Greek uprising in 1770, this fearsome naval commander, born in a prison in Istanbul, ultimately became the iconic heroine of the 1821 Greek War of Independence. She kept up family tradition and smuggled arms, raised units and commanded a fleet against the Ottomans during the war. As a result of her accolades, Russian Tsar Emperor Alexander I awarded her the honorary title of Admiral, making her the first woman to ever hold it.

> In her hometown of Spetses in 1825, an unknown assassin shot and killed Bouboulina, when her son's elopement with another family's daughter caused a feud.



MARYANA MARRASH

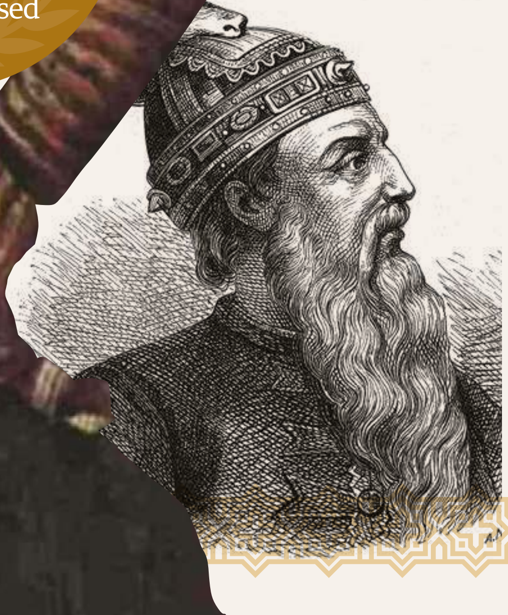
SYRIAN – MELKITE 1848-1919

Many on this list led armed rebellions; Marrash represented intellectual revolution. Part of the Nahda (rebirth) literary movement, she was the first woman published in the Arab dailies. She revived the tradition of salons, composing original work and discussing ideas in both Western and Eastern literature. Along with her Turkish counterparts contributing to the magazine Kadin - at the centre of the Young Turk movement - she represented an undercurrent of Ottoman feminists championing future rights.

SULTAN PASHA AL 'ATRASH

SYRIAN – DRUZE 1888-1982

This hero of Syrian nationalism fought for independence in the Levant, not only from the Ottomans, but also the succeeding French occupation, and even the Syrian government during a time of contentious dictatorships. After his father led a brutally repressed revolt in 1909, al 'Atrash developed a network of Arab nationalists across the region. In 1918, his forces were the first to enter Damascus and raise the Arab Revolt flag. But the lessons he learned fighting the Ottomans meant his influence would carry well into the 20th century as he waged guerrilla campaigns against other powers.



SKANDERBEG ALBANIAN 1405-1468

This Albanian folk hero was pursued in the Balkan mountains by the Ottomans multiple times for over 25 years - at the zenith of its power, no less. Born to a noble Orthodox family, he was sent as a devşirme tribute and continued in Ottoman service until the Battle of Niš in 1443, where he deserted with 300 men.

He used false papers from Sultan Murad II to take over Krujë and then forged an alliance with local lords called the League of Lezhë, then bolstering this with Naples and Venice. From 1443 to 1468, he repelled attempts at quelling his uprisings. During the Siege of Krujë he even repelled an army ten times in size.

Finally in 1468, he died of malaria and Venice took over the defence of Albania for a subsequent decade.

SHEIKH BEDREDDIN

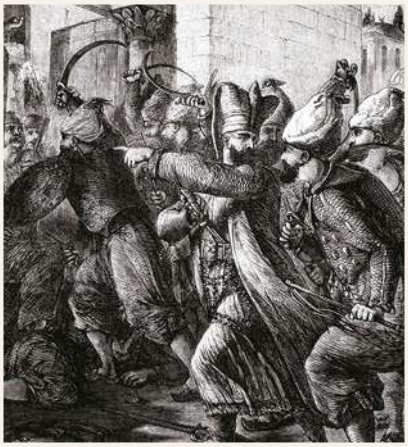
TURKISH/GREEK MUSLIM MYSTIC 1359-1420

Sheikh Bedreddin's radical mysticism favoured pantheism in the vein of Ibn al 'Arabi. His insistence on unity of all things meant that all religions preach the same message, that spiritual and physical were inseparable, and even that all property should be communal. His revolt in 1416 was crushed by Bayezid Pasha, but had long-lasting ideological and political consequences. The Ottomans were forced away from a 'Muslim' identity and more towards an 'Ottoman' identity that leaned towards assimilating minorities. His teachings lived on through Sufi orders like the Bektashis, and he was championed by modern Leftists.

ISMAIL ENVER PASHA

TURKISH/ALBANIAN 1881-1922

The most powerful man in the Empire's final days, Enver Pasha was part of the Committee of Union and Progress's 'Three Pashas' triumvirate. Aligned with the Young Turks, they won 1908 parliamentary majority, and staged a 1913 coup. Initially modernist reform-minded, wishing to restore the Empire's former glory, their policies of Turkicisation under the auspices of 'Ottomanism', ultimately lead to the 1915 Armenian Genocide. As Minister of War, he allied with Germany in WWI.



KABAKÇI MUSTAFA

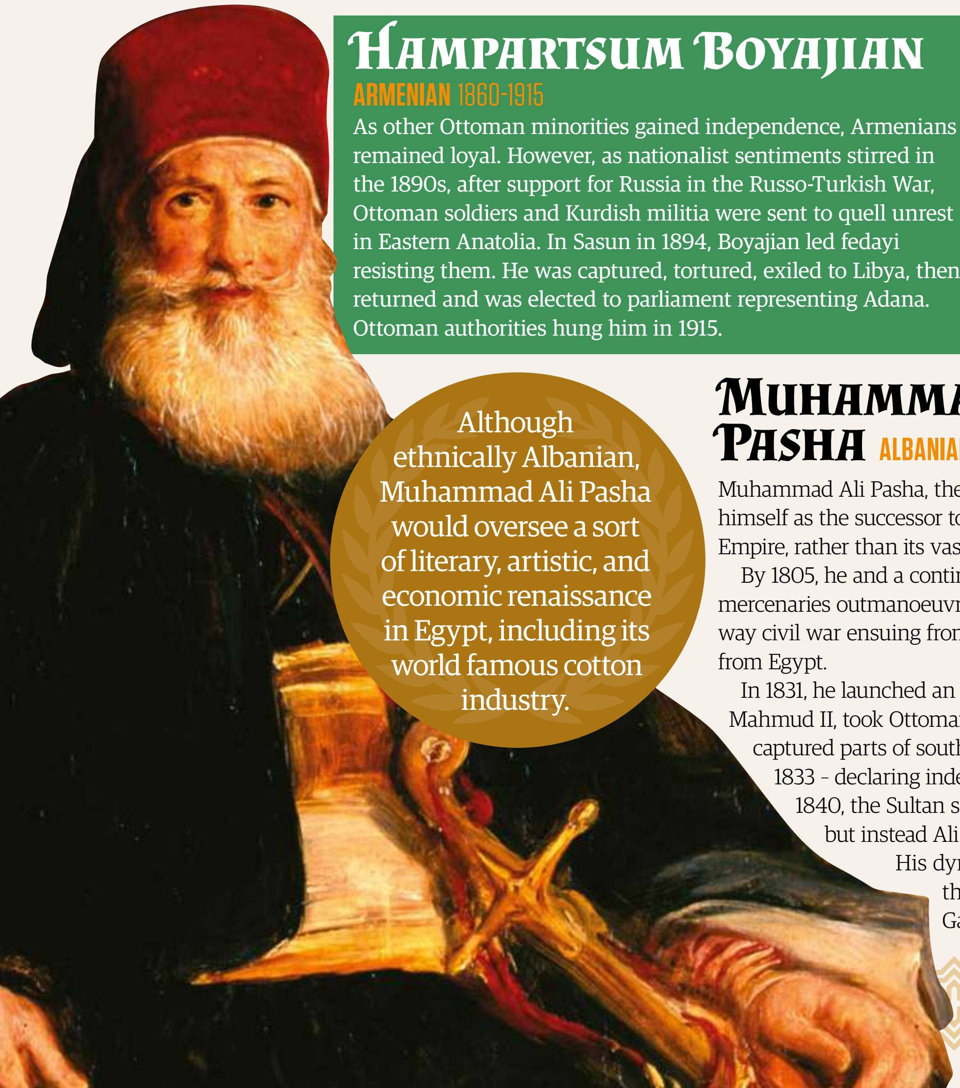
TURKISH/ALBANIAN 1770-1808

Little is known about his early life, but in 1807 Mustafa was an officer of a Yamak unit defending the Bosphorus against Cossack pirates. As Sultan Selim III began his Nizām-ı Cedīd reforms reorganising forces according to French standards, they revolted and killed a minister over new style uniforms. Kabakçı Mustafa reached Constantinople and was supported by Janissaries. They imprisoned the Sultan and someone assassinated him, then they installed his cousin Mustafa IV.

HAMPARTSUM BOYAJIAN

ARMENIAN 1860-1915

As other Ottoman minorities gained independence, Armenians remained loyal. However, as nationalist sentiments stirred in the 1890s, after support for Russia in the Russo-Turkish War, Ottoman soldiers and Kurdish militia were sent to quell unrest in Eastern Anatolia. In Sasun in 1894, Boyajian led fedayi resisting them. He was captured, tortured, exiled to Libya, then returned and was elected to parliament representing Adana. Ottoman authorities hung him in 1915.



Although ethnically Albanian, Muhammad Ali Pasha would oversee a sort of literary, artistic, and economic renaissance in Egypt, including its world famous cotton industry.

MUHAMMAD ALI PASHA

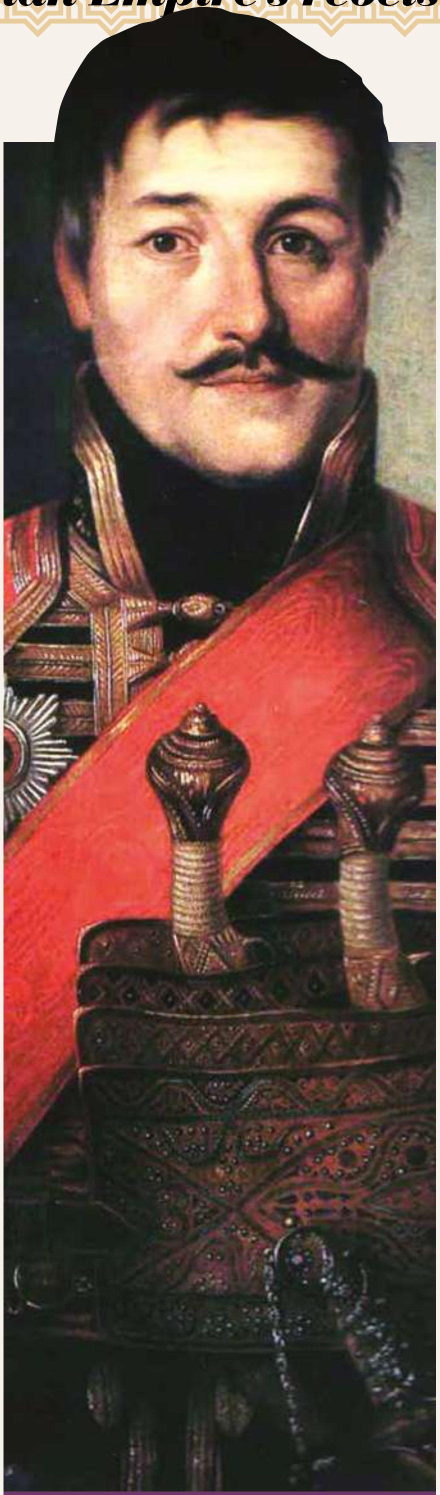
ALBANIAN – BEKTASHI 1769-1849

Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, saw himself as the successor to the decaying Ottoman Empire, rather than its vassal.

By 1805, he and a contingent of Albanian mercenaries outmanoeuvred all rivals in a three-way civil war ensuing from Napoleon's withdrawal from Egypt.

In 1831, he launched an outright war with Sultan Mahmud II, took Ottoman Syria, and temporarily captured parts of southern Anatolia itself by 1833 - declaring independence in 1839. In 1840, the Sultan sent troops to crush him, but instead Ali came out on top.

His dynasty continued until the 1953 coup d'etat by Gamal Abdel Nasser.



KARAĐORĐE

SERBIAN – EASTERN ORTHODOX 1768-1817

Following the 1801 assassination of Vizier Mustafa Pasha in Belgrade and the 1804 massacre of local Serbian rulers by renegade Janissaries, compatriots elected Karađorđe (Black George) to lead their uprising. Named for his infamous fiery temper, among friend and foe alike, he succeeded initially. Eventually, Russia cut aid. In 1812, the Ottomans brutally crushed the uncoordinated rebels, built a tower of rebel skulls, and Karađorđe's head was eventually impaled for a week-long display in Constantinople.

© Alamy

THE TANZIMAT REFORMS

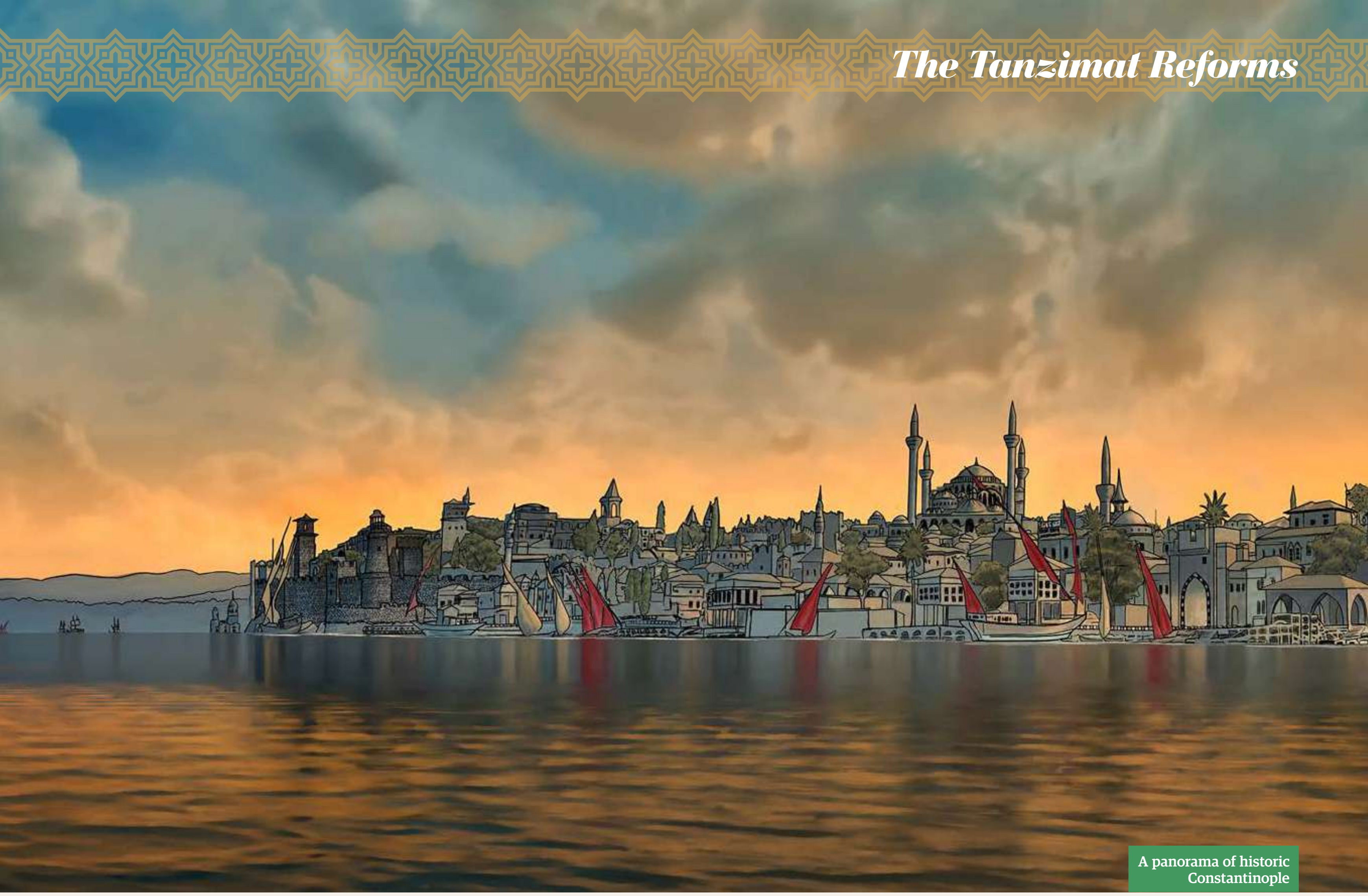
From undergoing heavy centralisation to building new railways, could the 'sick man of Europe' save itself from collapse?

Written by Mohammed Barber

Stretching over three continents and with a lifespan of more than six centuries, the Ottoman Empire was one of history's most powerful states. In the 16th century it was at its peak as a world superpower, but by the end of the 18th century things were beginning to look a little shaky. The humiliating Ottoman defeat in the Russo-Turkish War marked the end of their military's pre-eminence, and they also had to contend with rising nationalist sentiment in the Balkans, dubbed 'The Eastern Question', erupting into a series of crises. These were often actively aided by Western powers, who succeeded in breaking away chunks of the empire.

Faced with serious challenges to their empire's survival, the Ottomans undertook drastic measures in an attempt to save their fledgling domain. They tried to modernise and, in some cases, Europeanise the Ottoman Empire. The most famous of these reforms are grouped under the 'Tanzimat' - Turkish for 'Reorganisation' - umbrella, officially lasting from 1839 to 1876, although in reality, the reform period lasted the entire 19th century.

Military reforms were among the sultan's chief concerns, not only to keep European powers out,



A panorama of historic Constantinople

> “The elite troops of the Ottoman army were the Janissaries, instrumental to the very founding of the empire”

but also to maintain his own control over the empire. The elite troops of the Ottoman army were the Janissaries, instrumental to the very founding of the empire and loyal to the sultan himself. By the early 1800s, however, as central Ottoman authority weakened, the Janissaries' power increased and corruption seeped in through their ranks. The once-fearsome fighting force lost its military edge, which showed in successive defeats in major battles.

This did not escape the notice of Selim III, who set about revitalising the army, modelling it along European lines. His reformed force was called the Nizam-i Cedid. Military curricula was changed to include education on modern technology, including ballistics, mechanics, metallurgy and even algebra]. Selim III also introduced the new technologies of gun making and printing presses to the empire, as well as translating some noted Western works into Turkish.

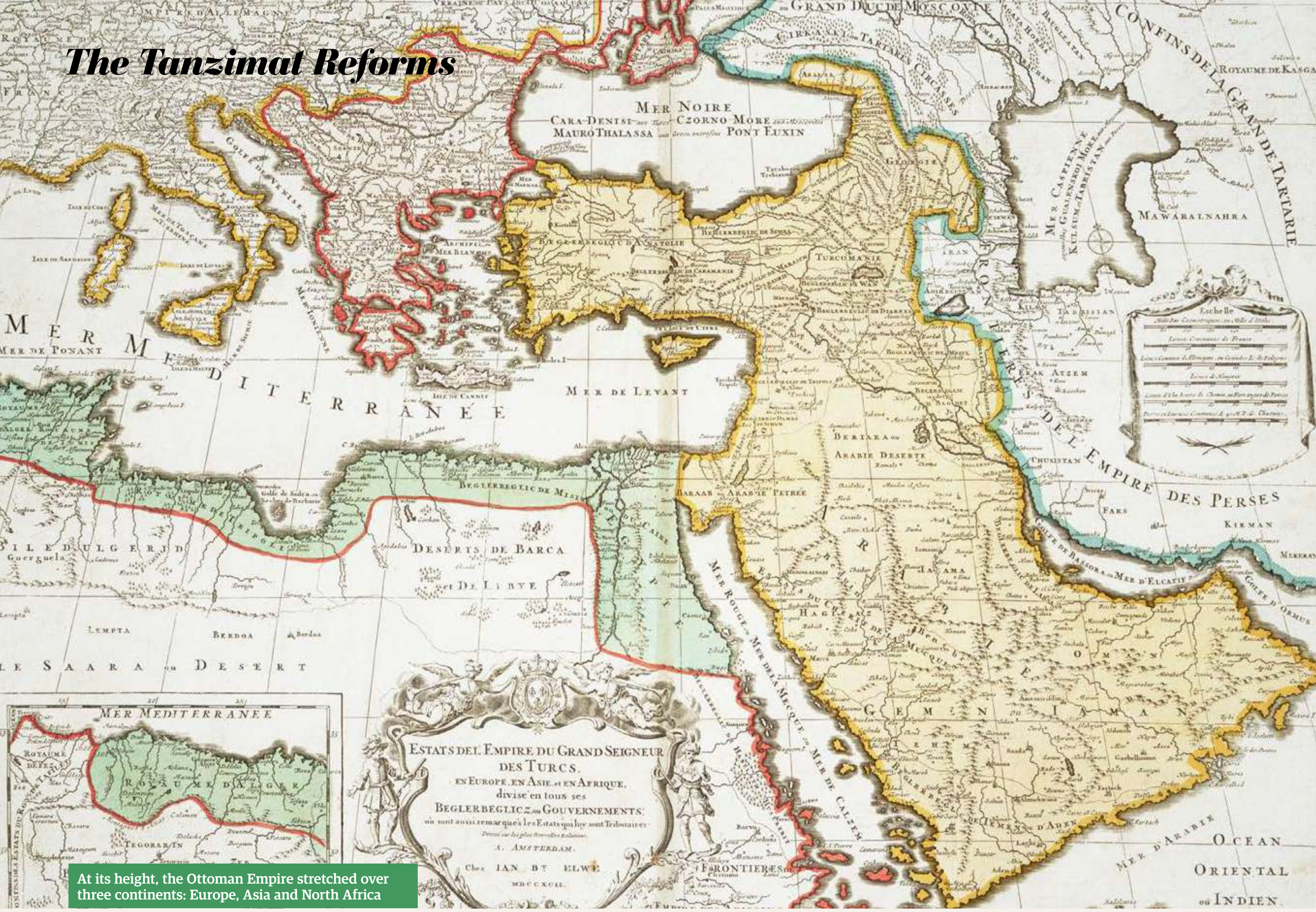
The move was seen by the Janissaries as a threat to their power and, slyly aided by religious authorities, they claimed the new reforms to be un-Islamic and revolted in May 1807. Selim III tried to negotiate with the rebels, but to little avail. He was deposed and murdered by Mustafa IV, who agreed to ditch the reforms. Mustafa IV's reign, however, was short lived, lasting only about 14 months between May 1807 and July 1808. Unlike his father, Selim III's son Prince Mahmud managed to survive the coup. After a year in hiding he came out of the shadows, and with the help of Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, Mustafa IV was deposed and killed. Prince Mahmud now became Sultan Mahmud II.

Mahmud II took after his father, and understood the military need for reform. He was not as conciliatory when it came to the Janissaries, but saw that he needed to tread carefully, at least to begin with. In the first few years of his reign he re-established central authority in the outlying provinces though the Janissaries using that time-honoured technique: bribery. He then tried to integrate the Janissaries into a new Western-style army that he was developing, much like his father. The Janissaries, unsurprisingly, were unhappy, and demonstrated against the reforms. But this time Mahmud II was prepared.

What followed is one of the most brutal and bloodiest episodes of Ottoman history, known as the Auspicious Incident. On 14 June 1826, the Janissaries overturned their soup cauldrons, a traditional symbol of revolt. Expecting as much, Mahmud II forced the Janissaries into their barracks, where cannons were primed and waiting for them. Those who survived being bombed to bits were taken prisoner and executed – in the end, thousands were killed. The next day the Janissaries, once the sultan's most trusted soldiers, were officially disbanded. Mahmud II had succeeded where his father had failed.

Once the troublesome Janissaries had been dealt with, Mahmud II turned his attention to administrative changes and centralisation. He created new ministries to replace existing offices, specialising their work to make them more efficient. The office of the Grand Vizier's secretary was transformed into the Interior Ministry, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs replaced the outmoded Chief of Scribes in 1836. But, naturally, all these reforms required a lot of money to finance them. Mahmud set about bringing under government control lucrative religious organisations, which had hitherto been nearly independent of the sultan, confiscating property, breaking monopolies and introducing new taxes.

Mahmud II passed away on 1 July 1839, succumbing to tuberculosis, and was succeeded by his 16-year-old son, Abdülmecid I. In the era of Abdülmecid I, the driving figure behind the reforms was not the sultan himself, but the minister for foreign affairs, Mustafa Reşid Pasha. Nicknamed the 'Father of the Tanzimat', Reşid


Mer Noire
Cara-Denisi
Mauro Thalassa
Czorno More
Pont Euxin
Grand Duc de Moscovie
Mer Mediterranée
Mer de Ponant
Mer de Levant
Deserts de Barca
Le Saara ou Desert
Mer Rouge
Arabie Deserte
Arabie Petree
Gemen
Empire des Perses
Ocean Oriental ou Indien
Estats de l'Empire du Grand Seigneur des Turcs,
en Europe, en Asie, et en Afrique,
divisé en tous ses
Beglerbeglicz ou Gouvernements;
A Amsterdam.
Chez Ian B.T Elwe
MDCCXCII.

At its height, the Ottoman Empire stretched over three continents: Europe, Asia and North Africa

> "Ethnic nationalism across the empire was on the rise as groups were demanding autonomy"

Pasha guided the young sultan in key areas, such as setting up expert advisory bodies to review legislation.

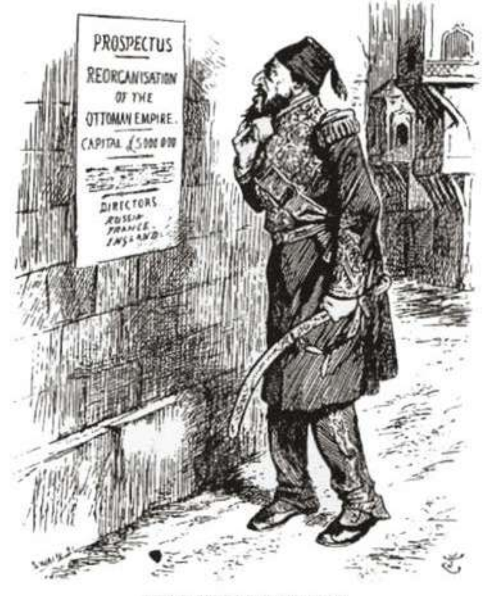
To state the new sultan's ambitious intentions, the Supreme Edict of Gülhane, or sometimes in more flowery language, 'The Noble Edict of the Rose Garden", was announced on 3 November 1839. This Noble Edict, masterminded by Reşid Pacha, marks the start of the official Tanzimat period, though the reforms had really started in earnest beforehand.

The 1839 Edict was not a piece of legislation, per se; it was more a statement of intent. It covered four broad areas: guarantees of life, honour and property for the sultan's subjects; the abolition of tax farming; a more standardised system of conscription for the army, and, crucially, extending privileges to all subjects no matter the religion they followed. This latter was hugely significant for two reasons. Firstly, ethnic nationalism across the empire was on the rise as groups were demanding autonomy. Many of these groups were also Christian and demanded equality before the law, which they were not getting under the existing system. Secondly, Western powers continued to use the age-old excuse of supporting their Christian brothers against their Muslim oppressors to justify interference in the region. Giving Christians, Jews and other minorities better rights would rather stymie the would-be invaders. Having said that, it's important to note that the edict did not quite declare Muslim and non-Muslim subjects equal in the eyes of the law, just that state privileges applied equally to everybody. It would not be until the Reform Decree of 1856 that all Ottoman subjects were - at least in theory - 100 per cent equal.

The millet system was how Ottoman bureaucracy was organised prior to administrative reforms. In this system minority groups were given the power to mostly manage their own affairs, with the Ottomans as their overlords. They were also granted the benefits of exemption from military service in return for a tax, and political representation through religious figures. Though this system had worked exceptionally well for a long time, things had started going south.

The Beylerbeyi Palace in Istanbul, which was built in the fashionable French Neo-Baroque style

With central authority declining in the mid to late 18th century the millets gained more leverage, helped by Christian missionaries and Western powers. The Ottoman government quickly got dragged into conflicts with the Druze, Greek, Serbian and Lebanese communities, but without the proper military force required to fend off European powers, the Ottomans had little bargaining power when it came to peace negotiations. What did work in their favour, however, was playing the European powers off against each other. In other words the British, French and Russians all needed the Ottoman

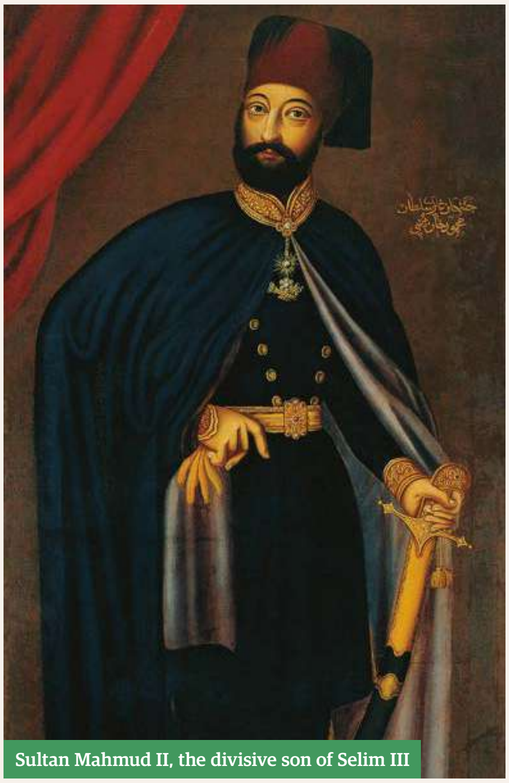


"TURKEY LIMITED"

SULTAN—*"BISMILLAH! Make me into a limited company? M'M - AH - S'pose they'll allow me to join the board after allotment."*

—*Punch* (London), Nov. 28, 1896

Caricature of Sultan Abdul Hamid II looking at the Empire's 'worth' as judged by Russia, France and Britain



Sultan Mahmud II, the divisive son of Selim III

THE 1876 CONSTITUTION

A short-lived constitutional experiment

Of the three main official decrees of the Tanzimat period, the 1876 Constitution was the last. Tensions were rising in the 1870s for economic reasons as well as political ones. Droughts and floods caused a catastrophic famine in 1873, leading to depopulation of the rural areas and migrations into the towns and cities, and tax revenues ultimately collapsed. To make things worse the international stock exchange crashed in 1873, making it harder for the Ottomans to raise loans. Radical reformers such as Ahmed Şefik Midhat Pasha and the Young Ottomans, a nationalist organisation made up of intellectuals exiled in 1867 for revolutionary activities, clamoured for a fully constitutional government and monarchy, but amid the political chaos at the time, this is what they ended up with:

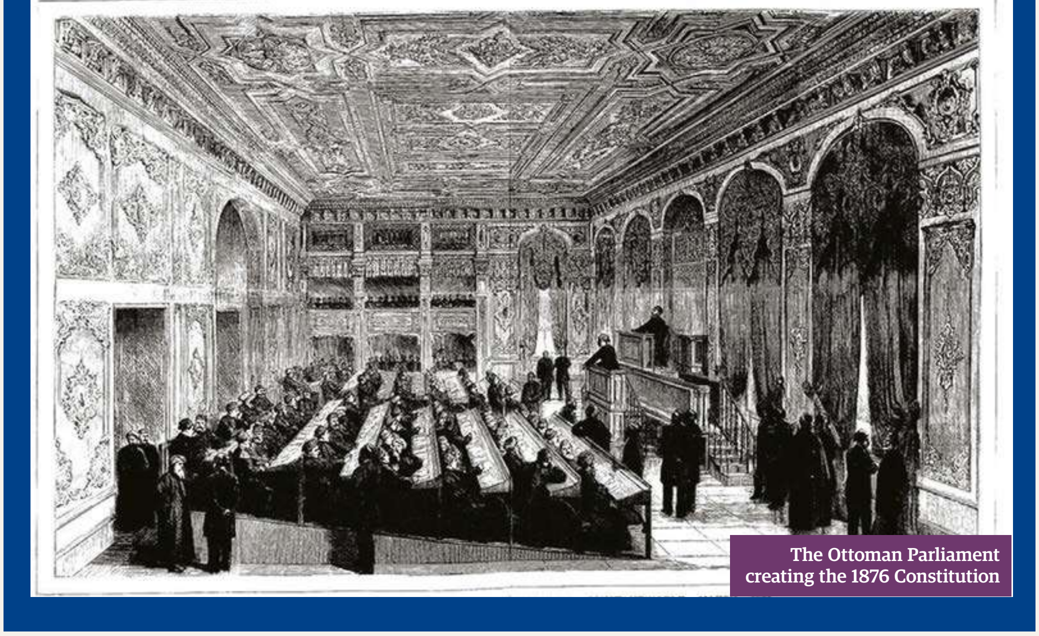
On the one hand, the government was granted:

- A two-chamber parliament, like that in Britain
- An independent judiciary
- More autonomous cabinet ministers
- Greater personal freedoms for Ottoman citizens

But the Sultan could still:

- Select cabinet ministers
- Choose the Grand Vizier
- Dissolve parliament
- Declare war
- Make binding laws by decree
- Opt not to publish laws he disagreed with

As such, the sultan still had considerable power within the new constitution. The powerlessness of parliament would become painfully clear during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. The war was going badly, and parliament complained about Abdul Hamid II's handling of it. But the sultan did not take kindly to this allegation, and because he effectively had a veto over any new law passed, Abdul Hamid II simply used his emergency powers to dissolve parliament, bringing to an end the Ottoman constitutional experiment.



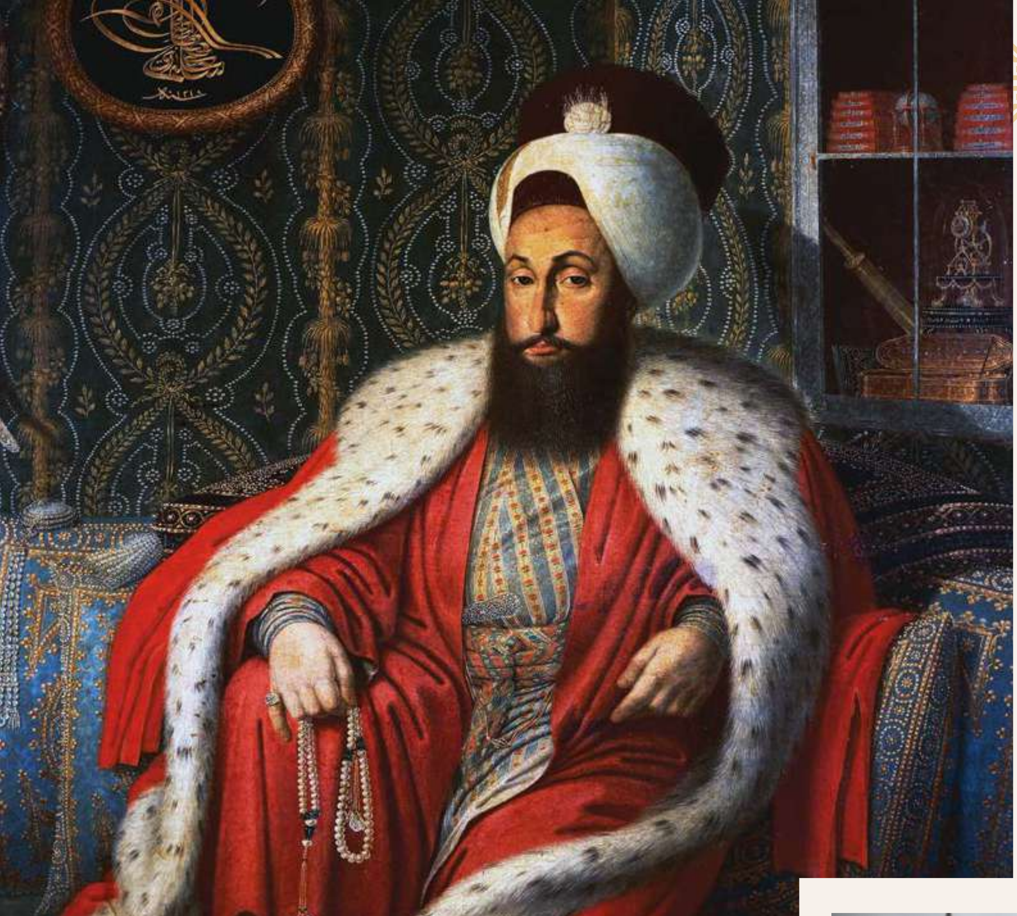
The Ottoman Parliament creating the 1876 Constitution

Empire as a buffer state, splitting East and West in half. This is why, when Muhammad Ali of Egypt was chomping at the bit to march on Constantinople in 1832 to 1833, the European powers stepped in to stop him. They believed he was dangerous enough to bring about the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire. As such, European intervention in regional nationalist uprisings in the empire was motivated less by religious fervour and solidarity with fellow Christians and more by desperation to maintain the status quo in relations between superpowers.

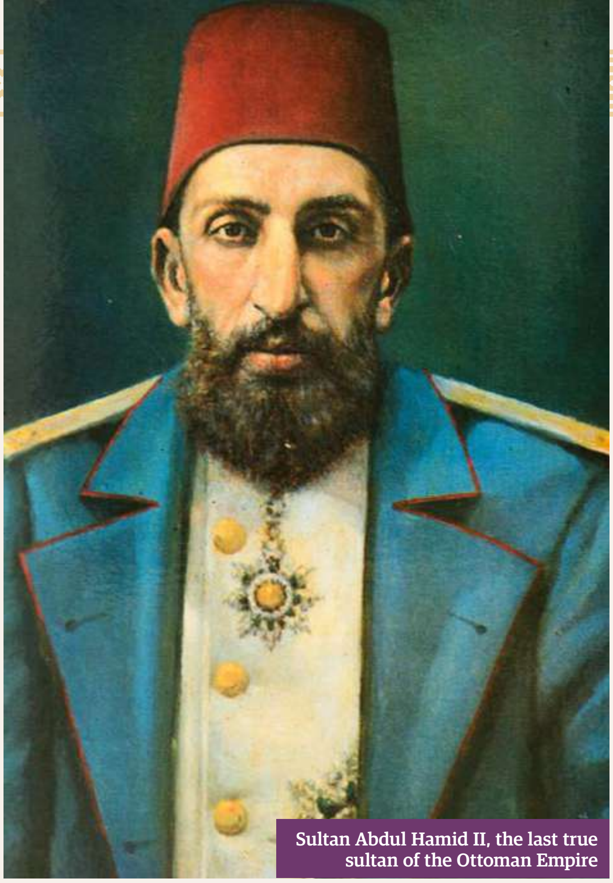
In an attempt to modernise and re-unify the empire, the sultans, albeit in a top-down fashion, tried to create a new Ottoman identity to bind its geographical, religious and linguistic differences together. The traditionally Islamic significance of 'sultan' was an inescapable quirk of the system, so rather than rallying Ottoman subjects of all religions behind him, emphasis was placed on the Ottoman 'fatherland' – loyalty and patriotism to the state, rather than to the Muslim sultan. As such, 'Ottomanism' was not just aimed at non-Muslims, but also non-Turks. The efforts were ultimately not just in vein, but also completely counter-productive. Rather than bringing people together under one banner, Ottomanism had the effect of politicising ethno-religious differences in a far more acute way in the age of nationalism than had taken place under the millet system. Needless to say, Ottomanism as a new national identity never took off.

Taxation was made a priority in the Noble Edict, and in 1840 a major revamp of the entire system was announced. Various piecemeal taxes were simplified to just three: a poll tax for non-Muslims, a tithe and service taxes. Taxes would now be collected by centrally appointed and well-salaried officials in order to stop corruption, and the requirement for communities to generously host visiting officials, a major thorn in some impoverished villages, was dropped.

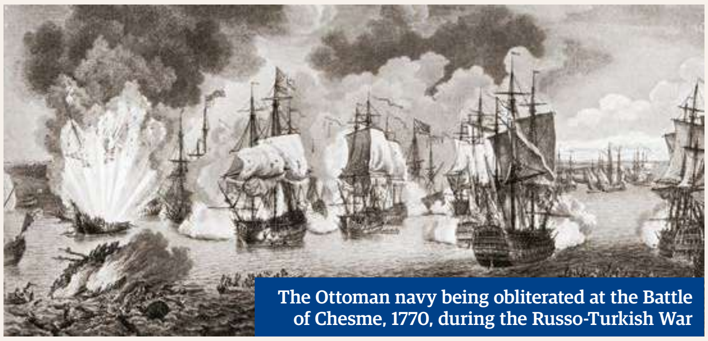
Sadly for Abdülmecid, these reforms failed. There were nowhere near enough competent officials to collect taxes, and the sultan's problems were compounded by a lack of information about possessions and tax farmers sabotaging collections. A new registration was launched



Sultan Selim III, the man who initiated reforms at the dawn of the 19th century



Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the last true sultan of the Ottoman Empire



The Ottoman navy being obliterated at the Battle of Chesme, 1770, during the Russo-Turkish War

Turkish soldiers dressed as Janissaries to celebrate the 94th Republic Day, 2017

in 1840 to find out the possessions of every household, but did not reach every part of the empire. In 1858 surveying and registering all land holdings was given new impetus, but it took a whopping 50 years to complete. Consequently, at a time when the state badly needed the money to carry out the Tanzimat reforms, government revenues fell dramatically and the old system of inefficient tax farming, which was infamous for corruption, had to be reinstated.

A dual legal system had always operated in the Ottoman Empire between the sultan's law and Islamic Shariah law. The Tanzimat reforms expanded the jurisdiction of secular legislation, and limited the scope of Islamic rulings to take precedence only over issues pertaining to family law. A hierarchy of secular courts was established to deal with cases involving non-Muslims. Moreover, new constitutions and representative bodies were created for the various millets, thereby freeing them from central religious control – which in many cases was the church. The Protestant Armenian community, after a considerable amount of British pressure, gained a new constitution for themselves in 1850, the Gregorian Armenians in 1853, the Jews in 1865 and Romanians in 1866. Ironically, however, rather than stemming it the new legislation indirectly stimulated nationalist sentiment, as many of the new, secular political representatives were nationalists.

The tide of secular reforms also reached the shores of education. To support the sweeping administrative changes, a host of freshly educated bureaucrats were needed, and so the Mekteb-i Mülkiye, a civil service school, was founded in 1859. Secular schools for boys aged ten to 15 had already been established by Mahmud II, but they were substantially reformed with the Regulation for Public Education in 1869. Based on advice from the French Ministry of Education, the regulation established a three-tier schooling system: a primary school in every large village or town quarter, a secondary school in every town, and imperial colleges in every provincial capital. These schools were for boys, though separate provisions for girls' education were also made.

The schooling reforms were slow to take off in the 1870s, but under Sultan Abdul Hamid II, primary and secondary education expanded rapidly. Across the empire in the 19th century there were four types of schools that children attended: traditional Islamic schools for Muslim children, secular state schools sponsored by the sultans, schools founded and funded by the various millets, and those run by foreign Catholic and Protestant missionaries and the Jewish Alliance Israélite Universelle. The education system was not designed to promote a feeling of national solidarity, but rather to keep various communities appeased.

Following the conclusion of the Crimean War, in which the Ottomans retained their territories but lost all sovereignty over them, another bout of reforms followed. The Hatt-I-Humayun was announced in 1856, which augmented the 1839 Noble Edict. Non-Muslim subjects were now

Building the Hejaz Railway from Damascus to Medina, one of Abdul Hamid II's infrastructure projects

> "TENSIONS CONTINUED IN THE BALKANS, UNTIL FINALLY FULL-ON REVOLT BROKE OUT"

declared equal to Muslim subjects, and civil and military positions were opened up to all regardless of their background, as were civil and military schools. This also meant conscription now extended to non-Muslims, though this could be avoided by anybody willing to pay a special tax. Furthermore, a new penal code based on the French model was introduced in 1858 - one that decriminalised homosexuality.

Tensions continued bubbling away in the Balkans until finally full-on revolt broke out in Bosnia, Bulgaria and Crete. The crisis saw three sultans in just three months: Abdülaziz, deposed on 30 May 1876; Murat V, deposed on 31 August that year; and finally Abdul Hamid II. Though the start of Abdul Hamid II's reign marked the official end of the Tanzimat, he continued reforms throughout his time in power. Modern communications were established throughout the empire, railway and road infrastructure projects increased, primary schooling expanded, new government ministries were established, there was restructuring of public debt and centralised government power further increased. Abdul Hamid II may have been a reformer, but he also abolished the barely two-year-old parliament, thereby ending the first constitutional period, and ruled as absolute monarch for nearly 30 years until he was forced to reconvene parliament in the second constitutional period in 1908, which lasted until the empire came to an end ten years later.

If the goal of the Tanzimat was to stem nationalist sentiment, then clearly the reforms failed. In fact, some of the reforms actively contributed to arousing nationalist fervour by giving political clout to ethnic identities. If the reforms aimed to preserve the Ottoman Empire, then on this point too they failed - the empire ceased to exist soon afterwards. However, to write off the Tanizmat era as a failure is a little misleading. Out of the Ottoman ashes rose the modern nation-state of Turkey in the 20th century, which wouldn't have been possible without the century-long reform that preceded it. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk took modernisation to completely new heights that would have had the sultans turning in their royal graves. Rather than their immediate impact and successes, ultimately it is the historical legacy of the Tanzimat reforms that remains important today.

Gülhane Park in bloom, which is where the Tanzimat Edict was read out in 1839

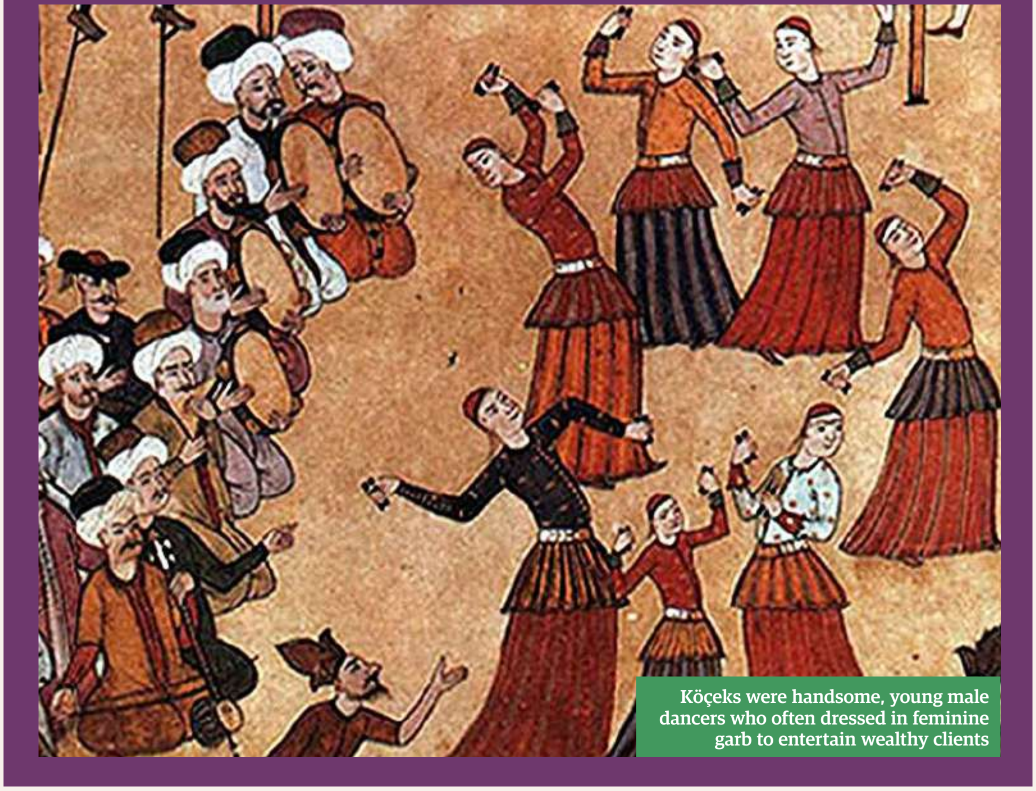
HOMOSEXUALITY DECRIMINALISED

Same-sex love was not considered 'unnatural' by the Ottomans

As part of the wide-ranging reforms, Sultan Abdülmecid and Reşid Pasha replaced the 1851 penal code by introducing the Imperial Ottoman Penal Code on 9 August 1858 which, among other massive changes to the criminal code, decriminalised homosexuality. The new 1858 code was heavily based on the French Napoleonic code of 1810, the latter of which also decriminalised so-called 'sodomy' and 'pederasty'.

Though the French were one of the first nations in modern history to decriminalise homosexuality, Napoleon's government was not particularly tolerant of homosexual behaviour. Concerned with upholding the highest moral standards, as they saw it, Napoleonic officials sometimes ignored the inconvenient fact the constitution no longer penalised sodomy and pederasty. The reasoning for the Ottomans decriminalising same-sex relations is not completely clear. However, same-sex activity among the elite men of Ottoman society was reasonably widespread. Ottoman poetry such as that written by Ahmed Nedîm Efendi, Mahmud Abdülbâkî, Ömer "Nef'î", İsa Necati and Ahmet Pasha, expressed the beloved male form.

Ottoman poets often sang of the beauties of popular shop boys, dancing boys, tavern waiters, wine boys, young Janissary soldiers and even roguish street urchins. Young male attendants in the hammams (bath houses) were often available for sex, and the coffee houses too were famous for male-male sexual relations. Though the terms 'homosexual' and 'homoerotic' cannot be applied retrospectively to Ottoman history, it is nonetheless clear sexual relations between males were common and not considered 'unnatural', or even something to be particularly concerned about.



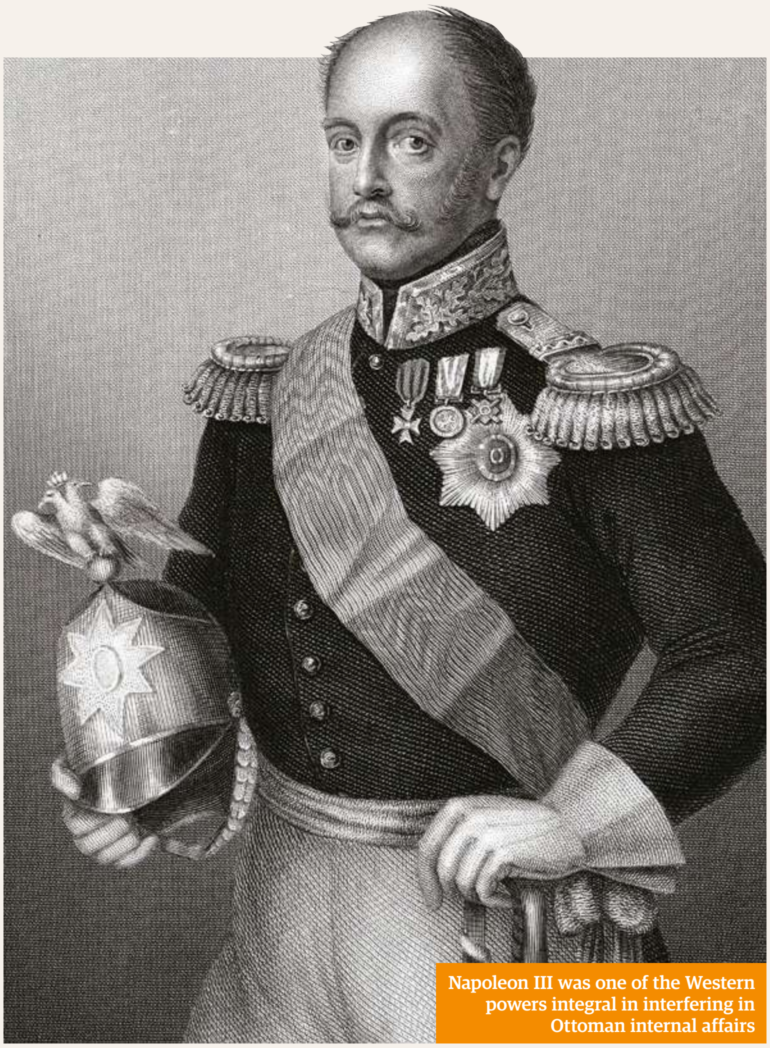
Köçeks were handsome, young male dancers who often dressed in feminine garb to entertain wealthy clients

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE?

The introduction of Ottomanism saw the Empire striving for modernity and unification of its religions… but external powers could not resist interfering

Written by Jem Duducu

The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where the controversial silver star was placed



Napoleon III was one of the Western powers integral in interfering in Ottoman internal affairs

Tsar Nicholas I of Russia spent his entire reign trying to capture or influence Ottoman territory

Many European writers of the 19th century put great emphasis on the superiority of the European powers, which were regarded as the pinnacle of civilisation. This concept of 'manifest destiny' was intertwined with nationalism and was believed to be both rational and logical. Over the rest of the world at this time there were only two large and ancient non-European empires in existence: China and the Ottoman Empire, and both of those had quite clearly fallen behind the West in terms of knowledge, expertise, industrialisation and virtually any other significant measure – at least in the eyes of European commentators. The West was surging forwards; the East was decaying and moving backwards. It was in the later 19th century that the Ottoman Empire became known as the 'sick man of Europe' – an epithet that was (at that time at least) well founded.

The reality was that the Ottoman Empire had been in gradual but relentless decline from around 1600 onwards. This was not so evident in the 1600s, but by 1700, it was clear that the era of Ottoman expansion was over. By 1800, many areas of the Empire were starting to yearn for independence, but it was the Greeks who were first to make the move. Following the Greek War of Independence, a huge area of historically 'Greek' territory was still Ottoman, but Greece was now an independent and antagonistic nation.

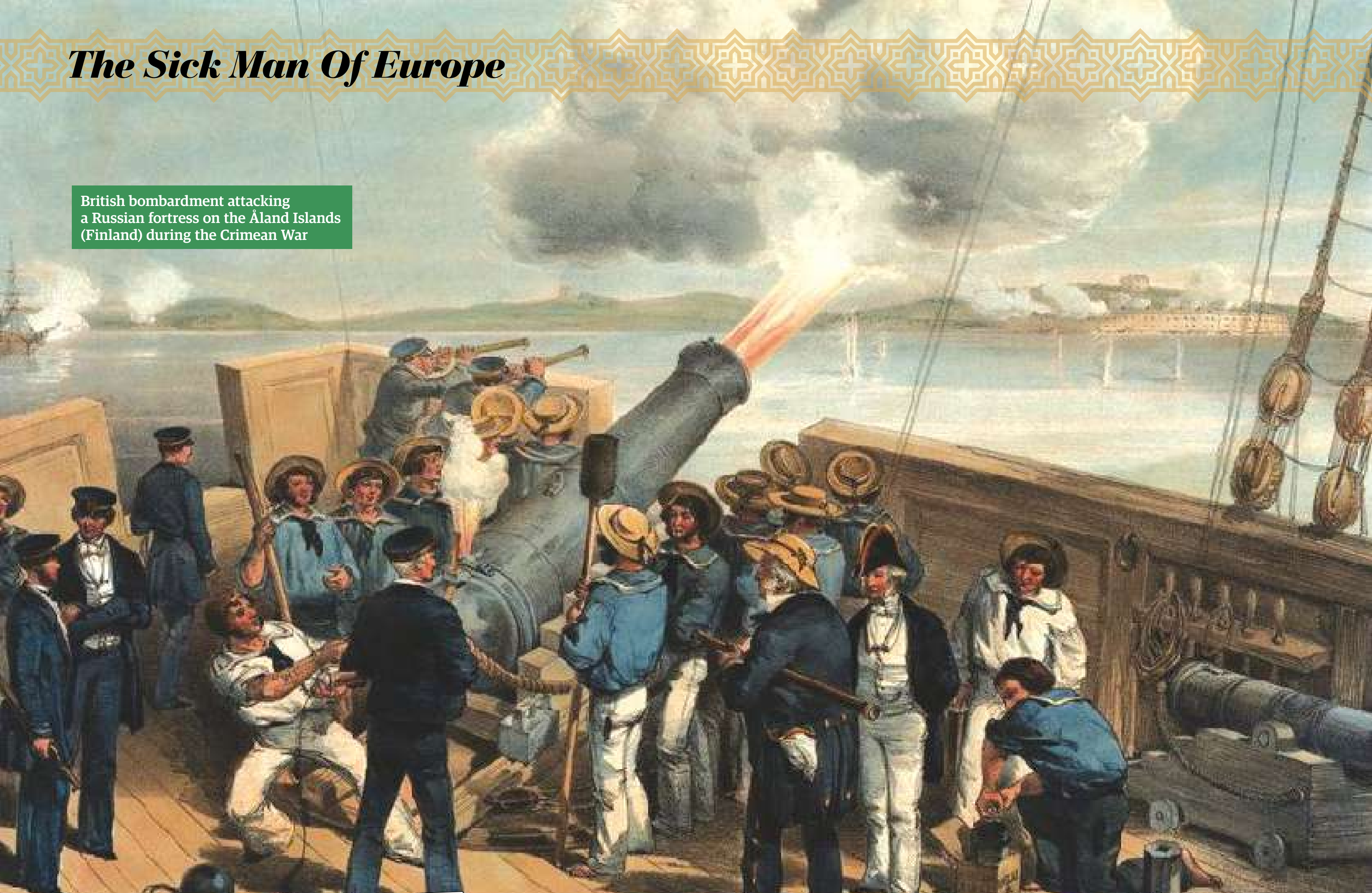
Sultan Mahmud II had realised the status quo could not be maintained and had begun to reform the Empire. Modernisation remained a priority for his son Abdülmecid, who had a much wider understanding of Europe than previous sultans. He had gone to university in Europe (a first for a sultan) and could speak fluent French (another first and, as it was the international language of diplomacy, a useful asset). He was eager to implement his father's plans to modernise, westernise and adapt to the political realities of the 19th century.

The sultans had always been rather remote figures, sitting behind palace walls, talking only to officials; in some cases they were so introverted they simply remained hidden away in their private quarters in the harem. The most contact a sultan would have had with the common people was going on campaign, and a sultan hadn't done that in a very long time.

Therefore, it was a breath of fresh air and a sign of how seriously Abdülmecid took his role (and the situation in the empire) that he now had regular Friday meetings with petitioners, a major change of protocol for a sultan. These attempts to connect with his subjects evolved into a number of tours to the Balkans, some of the Empire's islands and a number of towns and cities. At last the people of the Empire could see their sultan, and some even had meetings to express their grievances and concerns.

Abdülmecid's attempt at unifying the different religions and ethnicities, with equal rights for all (with the sultan at the centre), was dubbed Ottomanism. It may have worked had it not been for predatory external powers poking the 'sick man' to see what they could get away with. The concept was not having much success in overcoming religious identities, as was being

> "MODERNISATION WAS A PRIORITY FOR SULTAN ABDÜLMECID, WHO HAD GONE TO UNIVERSITY IN EUROPE"



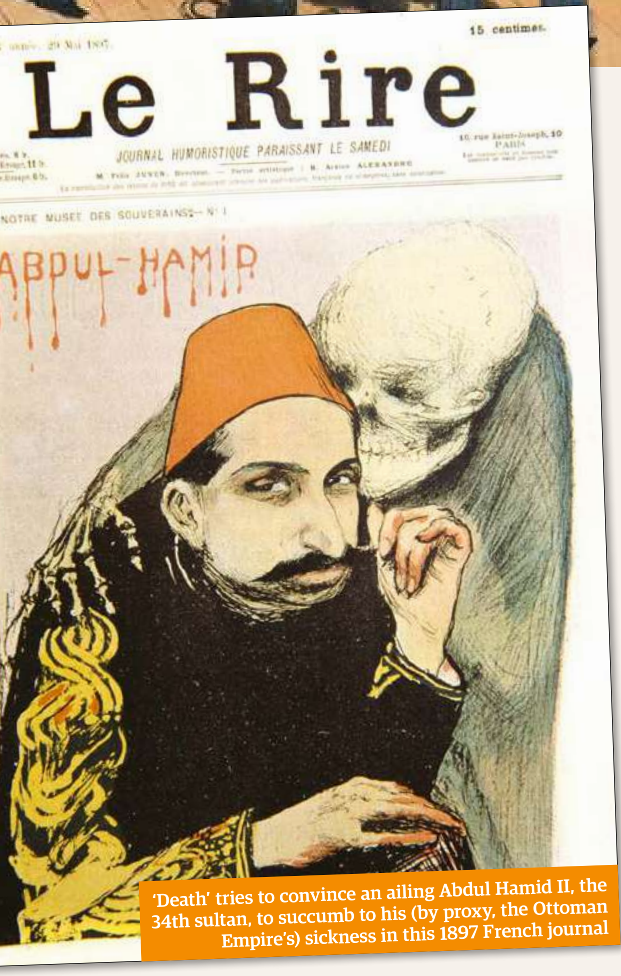
British bombardment attacking a Russian fortress on the Åland Islands (Finland) during the Crimean War

demonstrated readily by the Christians of the Empire. Levels of animosity amongst the Christian sects in Jerusalem were at fever pitch, no matter who was in charge, but they weren't any better in Bethlehem at the Church of the Nativity, the site where Jesus was said to have been born. This is one of the holiest places on earth for Christians but, by the late 1840s, after having been hit by two earthquakes in recent years, it had fallen into disrepair. That didn't stop it being a hotbed of religious power politics, though. The Roman Catholic powers wanted to share the keys to the doors of the church, but the Armenian and Orthodox churches would not agree.

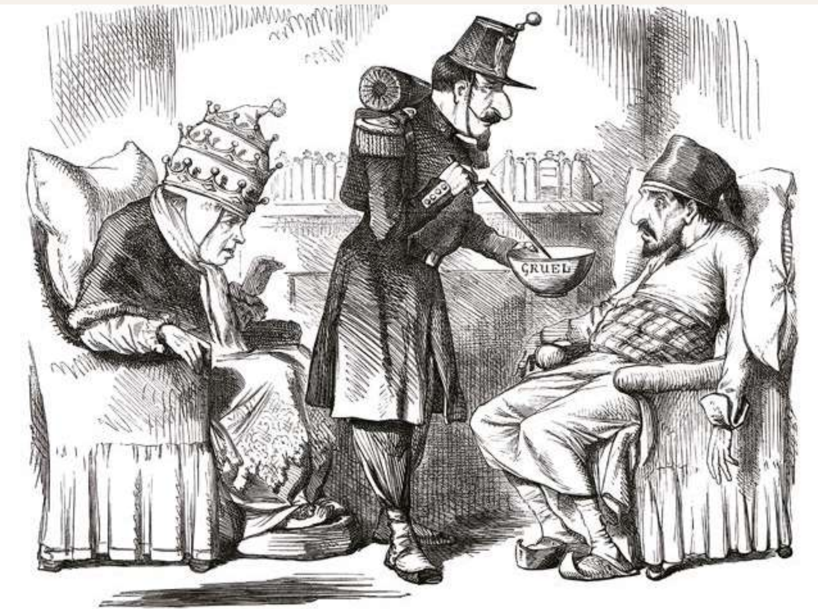
In order to please Napoleon III of France (nephew of the most famous Napoleon), the Ottomans allowed the French to present a silver star ornament to the Church of the Nativity, a sign, said the French, of its intention to protect the Roman Catholics of the Middle East. Although it was true that France, a Roman Catholic power, had been a recent ally, more Ottoman subjects were Orthodox or Armenian Christian, so when Russia objected to the placement of the star as a symbol of Roman Catholic supremacy, the Ottomans removed the star… an act which inevitably insulted the French. Abdülmecid's attempts to remain neutral in this Christian dispute were overtaken by the pettiness of those involved so, with no resolution in sight, the sultan did what any politician in a similarly tricky situation would do: he set up a commission. This group of Christians argued bitterly on multiple subjects for five years, and they still couldn't agree on anything. At some point in the proceedings, the silver star 'disappeared' from the church. The Roman Catholics blamed the Orthodox Christians (who were probably responsible), and it was the turn of the Orthodox Christians to be insulted.

While this seems like a mere anecdote, the disappearance of the ornament was a trigger for a massive war. The Crimean War of 1853-56

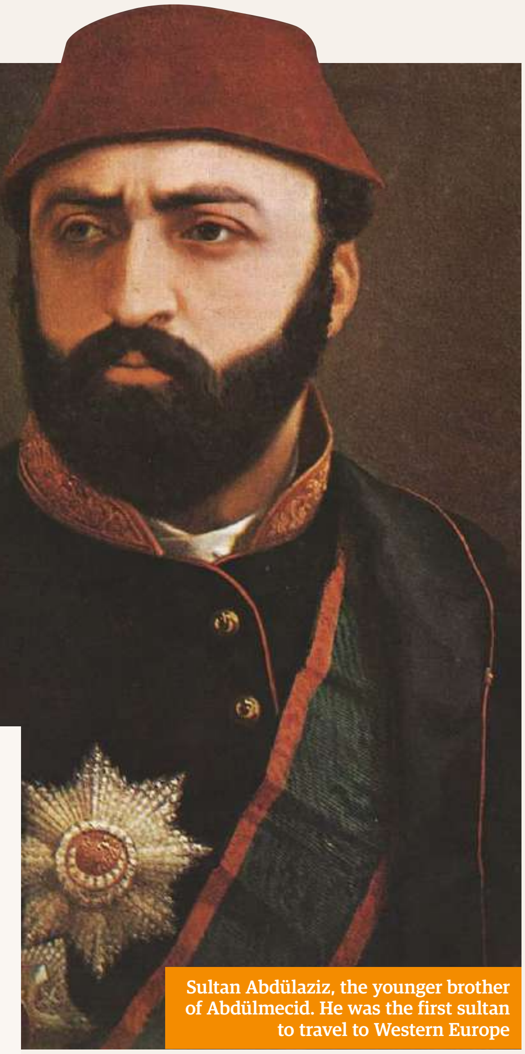
> "THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A SILVER STAR ORNAMENT WAS A TRIGGER FOR THE CRIMEAN WAR"


15 centimes.
Le Rire
JOURNAL HUMORISTIQUE PARAISSANT LE SAMEDI
NOTRE MUSÉE DES SOUVERAINS — N° 1
ABDUL-HAMID

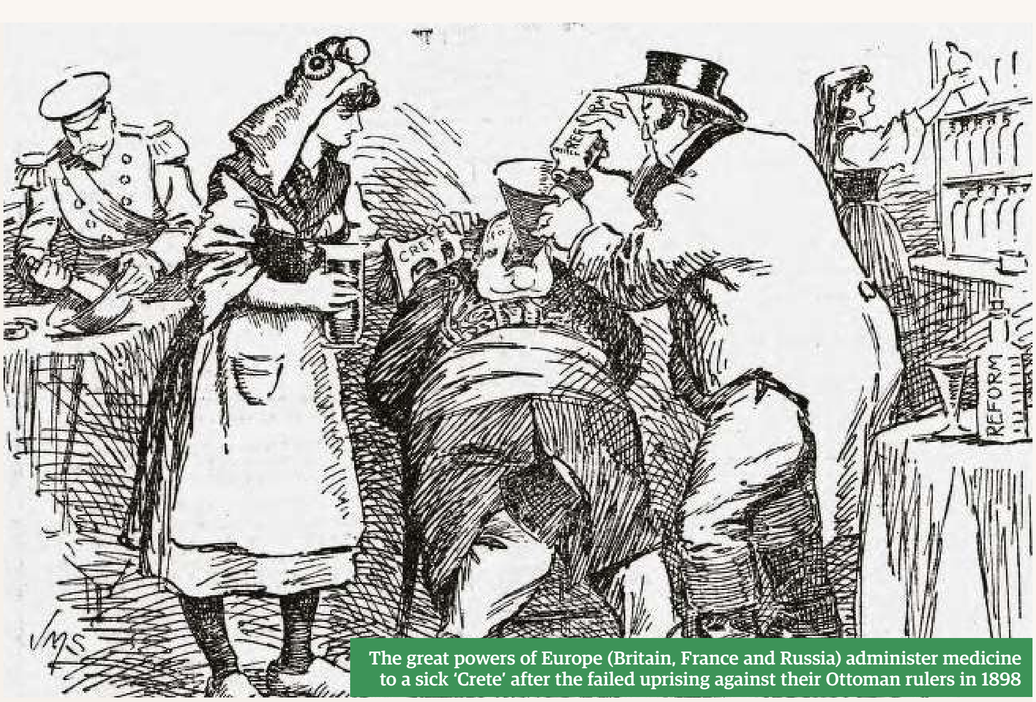
'Death' tries to convince an ailing Abdul Hamid II, the 34th sultan, to succumb to his (by proxy, the Ottoman Empire's) sickness in this 1897 French journal



Napoleon III feeds gruel to the Ottoman Empire – a reference to the advice he was said to have offered the Ottomans – in an 1860 cartoon, also featuring the Pope



Sultan Abdülaziz, the younger brother of Abdülmecid. He was the first sultan to travel to Western Europe



The great powers of Europe (Britain, France and Russia) administer medicine to a sick 'Crete' after the failed uprising against their Ottoman rulers in 1898

was the first major European conflict since the Napoleonic era. It took many powers by surprise, with Austria and Prussia thinking a diplomatic solution could be found while real, bitter fighting was going on. Britain and France rushed to the aid of the Ottoman Empire, sending men, money and resources to the Black Sea.

Why did Britain and France suddenly come to the aid of the Ottoman Empire, when just a few years earlier they were supporting the Greek War of Independence? Unsurprisingly, it was not due to any love for the Ottoman Empire, but because they realised that if they didn't intercede, the entire Empire could well collapse under the weight of Russian assaults. If that was allowed to happen, an unacceptable amount of land, resources and strategic power would fall to the Tsars.

The war ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1856, which can be seen as the agreement that re-established Ottoman power. The Empire had been on the slide for 200 years and, in the last 50-60 years, had become an embarrassment. The treaty was a humiliation for Russia, which lost its political influence over the Danubian Principalities as well as the areas around the mouth of the Danube that had once been Ottoman territory. The Black Sea became a demilitarised zone, neutralising the Russian fleet, and islands in the Baltics were also demilitarised. The city of Kars was returned to the Ottomans. Britain recognised the importance of the Ottoman contribution to the war and made Abdülmecid a Knight of the Order of the Garter, the highest honour Britain could confer.

In contrast to a stance that had prevailed over centuries, the West was now trying to make the Ottoman Empire feel like part of the western powers. While by no means an equal partner or even a key power, it had much to offer the West: a counter-balance to Russia, access to the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea trade routes, and influence on two continents. The sultans, for so long seen as Oriental 'others' and leaders to be ignored, were now players at the table of international diplomacy.

The strategic gains for the Ottomans were at the expense of the Russians, but it was the loss of influence within the Ottoman Empire that Russia felt most keenly. Russia could no longer claim to be the guardian of Christians and Christian shrines. That honour (and power) now lay with France.

The war resulted in an Ottoman, French and British victory, and the silver star was returned to the church, having cost half a million lives. But the victory gave the Ottomans breathing space; the sick man was off life support (at least for now). However, within 30 years the Western powers were distracted by events elsewhere, and the Empire was never able to organise itself into an industrialised and unified whole.

In 1859, riots and unrest broke out across Lebanon and spread into Syria, and in 1860, this civil disorder turned into a full-scale war. The fighting was split between Muslims, Druze (a separate ethnicity and religion) and Christians, but the alliances, such as they were, varied. The Ottoman central government had always depended on local leaders to resolve local issues, something they had failed to do when the fighting turned into multiple massacres. For example, approximately 20,000 Christians were killed by the Druze, and hundreds of Christian churches and villages were destroyed.

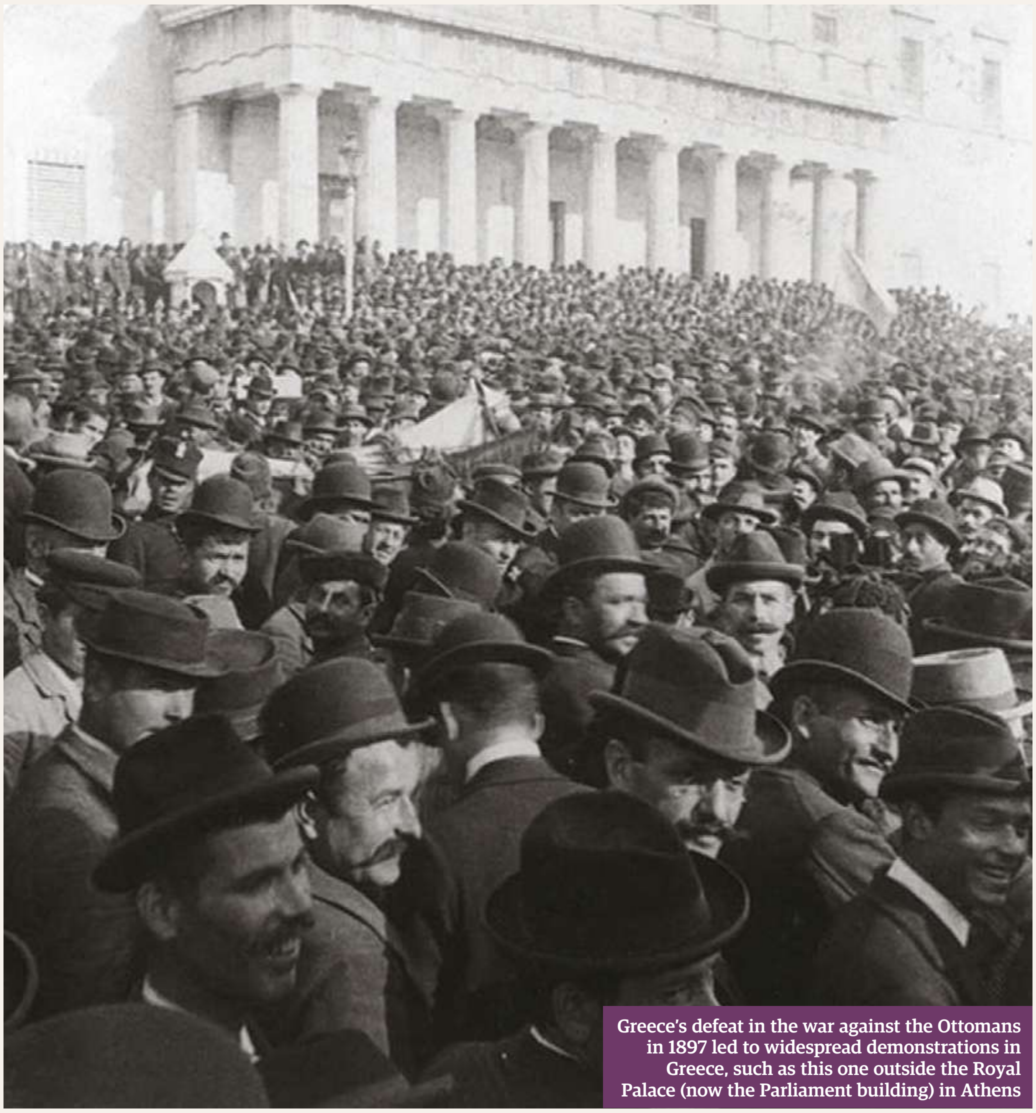
Abdülmecid allowed a French-led coalition of Austrian, British, French, Prussian and Russian forces into the area. The result was good news for Lebanon, which became semi-independent, and both good and bad news for Abdülmecid. The great powers were willing to engage the Ottomans rather than simply blame them, which was good news, but the bad news was that an empire in need of external help was signalling weakness.

In 1873, there was a drought in Anatolia and the crops failed. By now, a younger brother of Abdülmecid, Abdülaziz, was sultan. Thanks to the expense of the new navy, his own profligate spending and a healthy dose of financial mismanagement, his government had to declare a sovereign default in 1875, but the problem had been developing for decades.

From 1855 to 1875, the Ottoman debt increased 28-fold. Government bonds are, essentially, the way any nation gets a loan. The quicker governments pay off their debts, the more likely others are to back future projects financed by government bond issues. Sovereign default by the Ottomans meant that finding any future funding would be very difficult at a time when the economy most needed an injection of cash. The result was an increase in taxes on farmland but, as farmers were only just recovering from the famine, it was the worst possible time to demand higher taxes.

Italian forces landing in North Africa during the 1911 Libya campaign

Druze farming family, based in Palestine, photographed during the Ottoman era



Greece's defeat in the war against the Ottomans in 1897 led to widespread demonstrations in Greece, such as this one outside the Royal Palace (now the Parliament building) in Athens

> "IF THE OTTOMANS HAD SIDED WITH THE ALLIED FORCES IN WORLD WAR I, THEY COULD HAVE ENDURED"

It caused a terrible mess, which emboldened rebellious groups looking for any excuse to break away to try their luck. Briefly, two examples: in 1897, when Greece tried to expand its territory at the expense of the Ottoman powers, it was a bitter defeat for Greece. Then in 1911, Italy invaded Ottoman Libya and was fought to a standstill. It was not the expected easy victory for Italy.

Ottoman rulers are often blamed for being ineffectual and distracted by the goings-on in their harem, but this doesn't represent the full truth. There was certainly a run of ineffective Ottoman rulers in the 16/1700s, but when the crunch came, this period produced some of the most energetic rulers for centuries. Furthermore, it's hard for any empire to survive when it is all but surrounded by expansionist empires. In the case of the Ottomans, there was Russia to the north, the Habsburg Austro-Hungary Empire to the west and, to the east, Persia. While Persia was no longer an aggressive threat, the sultans had never been able to completely defeat their old enemy.

Like many empires, the Ottoman Empire was hugely successful as it expanded; success bred success. But given that it had stagnated in the 1600s, it is remarkable how much of it was still left at the start of the 20th century, when many modern countries were still under its direct control, including parts of northern Greece and Thessaloniki, Cyprus, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Israel/Palestine, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. You can see that had the Ottomans picked the Allied side in World War I and held this territory into the 1930s and the discovery of the region's natural oil and gas reserves, the Ottoman Empire could well have not only endured, but become fabulously wealthy. But of course, that's not what happened.

The story of the Ottoman Empire was not one simply of inexorable decline. After the apparently near-fatal blow of Greek independence, the Empire was to last for nearly a century more. The death rattles of the sick man were often the last-ditch strikes at enemies who sought to undermine it. The Empire came to an end, but it's worth noting that the Ottoman sultans had remained in power longer than either the Tsars or the Kaisers.

THE SULTAN'S PALACE

Inside Abdülmecid's home on the banks of the Bosporus - the Dolmabahçe Palace

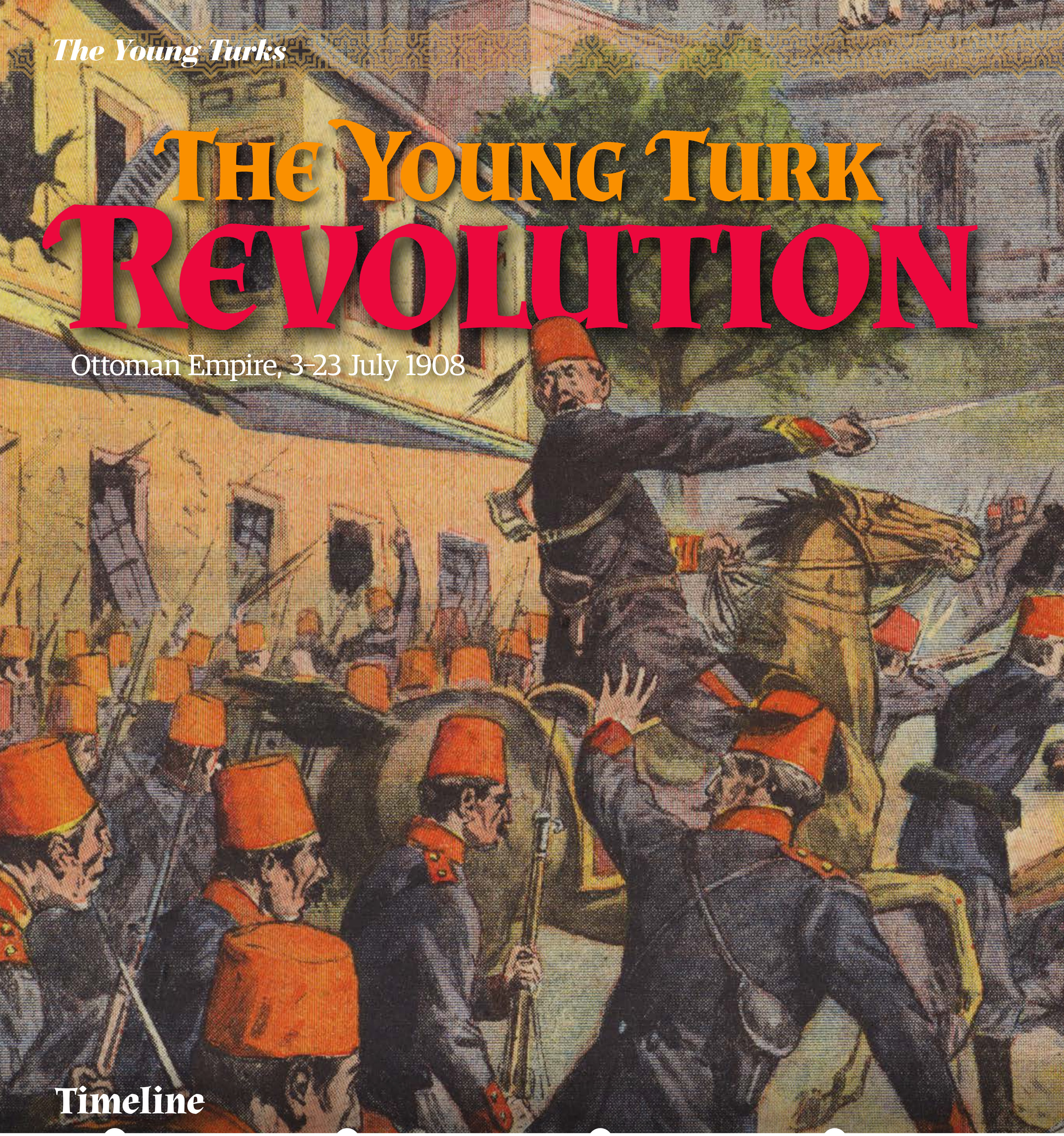
Despite his desire to drag the Empire forward and the lack of funds that dogged the fulfilment of his objectives, Abdülmecid felt no need to curb his personal spending. The man loved luxury and the symbol of his extravagant spending (and his desire to modernise) can be seen in Dolmabahçe Palace. For the vast majority of the Empire's sultans, home had been Topkapı, but that had been constructed in the 15th century and continually modified and extended over the centuries. It was beautiful, but eastern in its design and medieval in its comforts. There was an argument for a more modern palace to reflect the sultan's more modern outlook but, with a general shortage of funds and, specifically, with a shortage of funds for reforms, could the Empire afford a new palace? Of course it could.

Dolmabahçe Palace was said to have been built to prove that the Ottomans still had the resources to undertake such a grand enterprise… and bankrupted the Empire in the process. It isn't quite as neat as that but, as a result of this reckless spending, the currency was partly debased and some of the loans from Britain and France, designed to help with modernisation (and fighting the Crimean War), were spent on a double horseshoe crystal staircase and the world's largest collection of Baccarat crystal chandeliers, including a ginormous one that weighs 4.5 tons. Adjusting the figures for inflation, more than one billion pounds was spent in the construction of this Baroque/Rococo monstrosity (or masterpiece).

This Baccarat crystal chandelier is the centrepiece of an opulent stairway - with a bannister that's also made from crystal

The Young Turk Revolution

Ottoman Empire, 3–23 July 1908



Timeline

1889

Ottoman students conspire against the sultan, but are discovered and flee to Paris. Two years later, they form the Committee of Union and Progress.

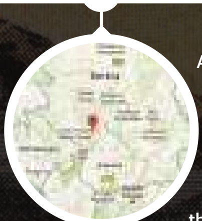
1906

Young educated Turkish officers of the Third Army Corps garrisoned in Salonika, Macedonia, form another revolutionary group called the Ottoman Liberty Society.

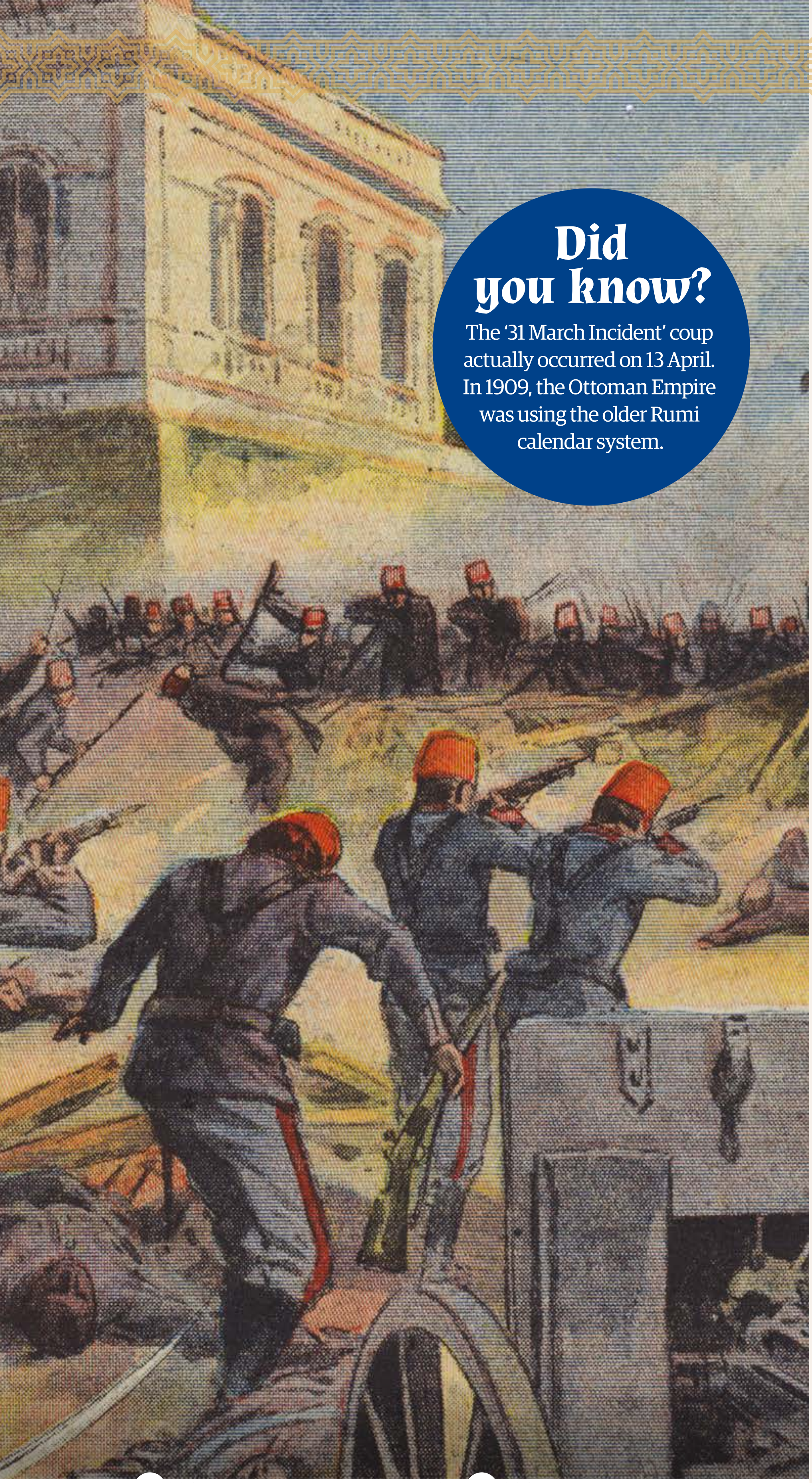
1907

Both groups join in a shaky alliance with the League of Private Initiative and Decentralisation, led by the aristocracy under Prince Sabahaddin.

FEBRUARY 1908



Austria announces a railway link through Novi Pazar. This would bring the western Balkans under Austrian influence, threatening the Ottoman Empire.



Did you know?

The '31 March Incident' coup actually occurred on 13 April. In 1909, the Ottoman Empire was using the older Rumi calendar system.

3 JULY 1908

Major Ahmed Niyazi of the Third Army Corps leads a revolt against the provincial authorities in Resen, Macedonia. The uprising spreads rapidly around the empire.

23 JULY 1908

In the face of overwhelming popular support for the revolution among the army and populace, Abdul Hamid agrees to recall parliament and restore the constitution.

What was it?

The Young Turks weren't one political party. As their rather vague name suggests, it was a loose alliance of several different organisations that arose around the turn of the 20th century. The Ottoman sultan, Abdul Hamid II, had started out as a moderniser, and introduced the first democratic constitution in the Islamic world. However, within two years, he had returned his empire to absolute dictatorship. The bureaucratic and educated classes were concerned that economic and political manoeuvring from the British, Russian and French could break up the Ottoman Empire, and only a strong constitution could save it. In 1891, a group of radical student exiles formed the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in Paris. They studied previous successful revolutions and allied with other disaffected Ottoman groups.

The Ottoman army in particular was being kept deliberately underfunded by Abdul Hamid, who preferred controlling the country with his network of spies. In July 1908, Major Ahmed Niyazi, fearing the sultan would discover his political views, launched a pre-emptive revolt. Within three weeks, the constitution was restored.

What were the consequences?

Once they gained power, the Young Turks had no clear plan for running the country. In 1909, there was a counter-coup (known as the '31 March Incident') by the rank and file soldiers, over pay and the increasing secularisation of the country. This was suppressed, but foreign European powers saw the weakness of the new state and used these upheavals as pretext for military incursions. In quick succession, Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria declared independence, and Italy occupied Tripoli in Libya. Then in 1912-13, the two Balkan Wars resulted in the loss of almost all of the rest of the empire. When Britain and France refused to come to its defence, the Ottomans sided with Germany during World War I, which resulted in the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire at the Treaty of Sèvres. The Young Turks had overthrown their dictator to preserve their empire but instead had brought about its dissolution.

Who was involved?

Abdul Hamid II

1842-1918

The 34th Ottoman sultan introduced the empire's first democratic constitution in 1876, but two years later reinstated his dictatorship.

Ahmed Niyazi Bey

1873-1913

A senior captain in the Third Ottoman Army, he mutinied with 200 officers and civilians, sparking off the Young Turk revolution.

Ahmed Riza Bey

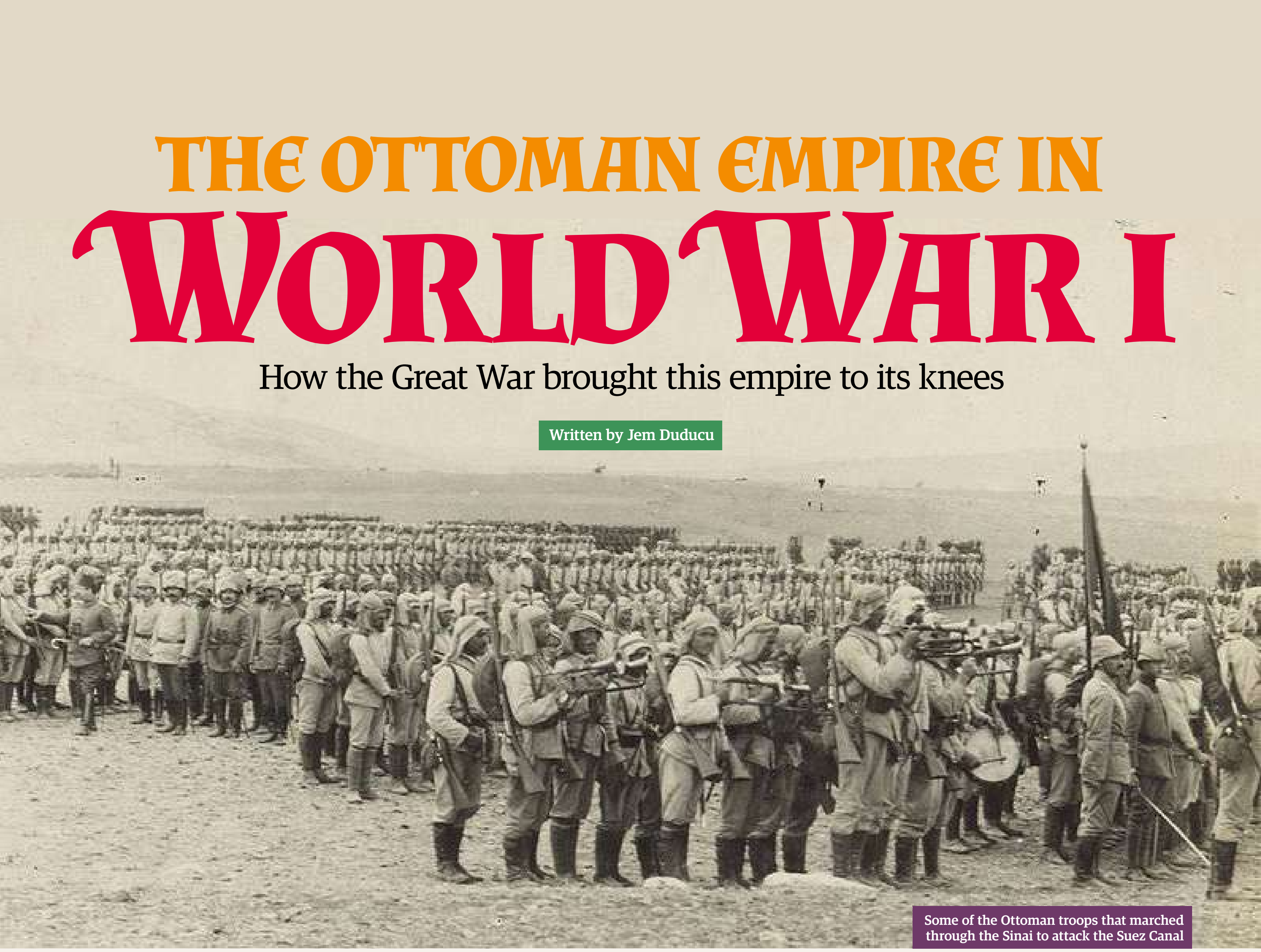
1859-1930

A prominent member of the Young Turk movement, he became president of the Chamber of Deputies after the revolution.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN WORLD WAR I

How the Great War brought this empire to its knees

Written by Jem Duducu



Some of the Ottoman troops that marched through the Sinai to attack the Suez Canal

Mehmed V was a quiet man, a poet who had spent his first 30 years isolated in the harem. Nine of those years were spent in the cage, a place of solitary confinement for any male relative thought to be a threat to the current sultan. Mehmed was neither a great statesman nor a great warrior, yet his reign would cover three devastating industrial wars that would ultimately tear the 600-year-old Empire apart.

Mehmed was in his 60s when he was girded with the sword of Osman. He was old and disinterested in the day-to-day affairs of state, which is exactly what the fledgling parliament needed. However, just because the reins of power had finally been taken from the Sultan didn't mean the Empire was only going to improve. Real power now was under a triumvirate known as the Three Pashas.

How the Ottoman Empire got involved in World War I is a little odd. Tensions were growing between the Ottoman navy and the ship builders in Newcastle, England. The Ottoman government had ordered two new warships from Britain, the master builder of navies. The two ships were to be called the Sultan Osman (which was fully paid for) and the Reşadiye (which had a few instalments to go).

The ships were ready by the summer of 1914, but the engineers claimed they needed more time to run tests. This was a delaying tactic. It wasn't clear whether the Ottomans would join the approaching war and, while Britain didn't want to antagonise the Ottomans, neither did it want to deliver two state-of-the-art battleships to a potential enemy.

The delay was ordered by Winston Churchill, who knew the Brits were walking a tightrope. The contract was legal, but the political situation had changed dramatically in the years it had taken to build the warships. Less than a day before the Ottoman crescent and star flag was to be hoisted on the Sultan Osman, a sign that the handover had officially taken place, the ship was confiscated and the Ottoman crew forced to evacuate. The day after that, Churchill declared that the British government had embargoed the two warships. When Britain declared war on Germany the following day, the two ships were taken over by Britain without compensation.

Mehmed V

Some Turkish historians say this is how Britain declared war on the Ottomans. They did not; they just didn't hand over two ships to a potential enemy (the alliance between the Ottomans and Germany was not yet confirmed, but the British government had guessed as much). It was wrong of Britain not to compensate the Ottomans, but they opted for the consequences of these actions rather than hand over weapons of war to the enemy. At the same time, two German warships, the Goeben and the Breslau, were being pursued by the Royal Navy in the Dardanelles. When the German ships docked in Istanbul, they were confiscated by the Three Pashas who announced that the ships had been 'bought' by the Empire to replace the British ships they had not received. The ships were renamed Yavuz and Midilli. The German crews remained, but they were issued with fez hats and ordered to raise the Ottoman flag. The Royal Navy was forced to break off the pursuit because, technically, the Ottoman Empire was still neutral even though the shooting had already started in Europe.

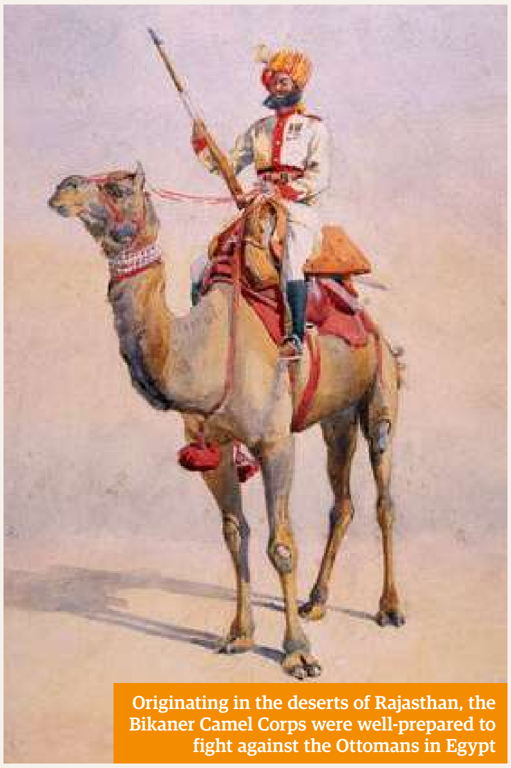
In October, the Yavuz and the Midilli sailed into the Black Sea and shelled Odessa and Sevastopol. The attacks caused minor damage but were completely unexpected and, of course, the crews of both vessels were German. This led to total confusion. Had the Ottoman attack been an accident? France, Britain and Russia were being pushed back on all fronts and couldn't afford to bring in another enemy by accident. At the same time, the Three Pashas could have been duped by their German partners. Mehmed Talaat Pasha wrote, "None of us knew about this... so, we entered the war as the result of a fait accompli."

Then again, this could be Mehmed's hindsight speaking after getting involved in a disastrous war and a later attempt to distance themselves from an arrogant mistake. It took a few days to unpick the rumours from the facts, at which point the Allied powers declared war on the Ottoman Empire. This was the convoluted way the Ottoman Empire became involved in its last war, World War I.

A clever plan was hatched, which, for Germany, was always about cutting Britain off from its limitless resources in Asia. As the Ottoman Empire bordered Egypt, it was thought an Ottoman-German force could spring a surprise attack and capture the Suez Canal. Initial probes led to the exotic image of the British Imperial Bikaner Camel Corps (the soldiers were largely Sikhs) fighting in the desert near El Qantara against a Bedouin militia. The ambush was successful, but the camel corps lost around half its men, and this was only the start of the fight for control of the canal.

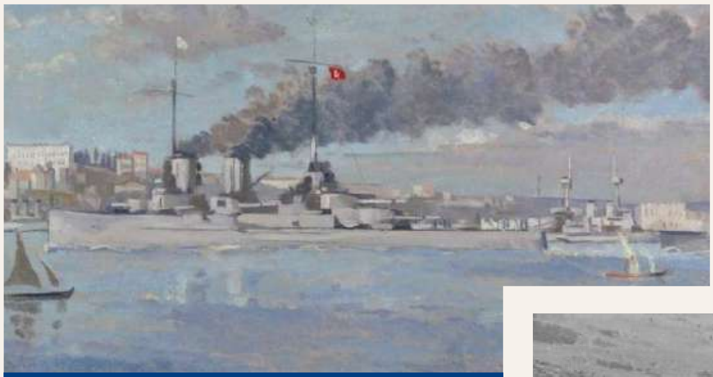
The Ottoman main force was led by one of the Three Pashas, Ahmed Çemal, and General Friedrich von Kressenstein. They had prepared a number of supply depots, and engineers had gone ahead to drill wells to supply fresh water across the Sinai desert. The careful preparations were to allow the Ottoman force of about 20,000 to travel undetected right up to the edges of the canal. Von Kressenstein was also the designer of the pontoon bridge to get the Ottoman forces over the Suez Canal and on into Egypt. Had this raid been conducted just 10 years earlier, it would've worked. The organisation was excellent, and the large force travelled across the desert without succumbing to any ambushes or logistical problems. But von Kressenstein had overlooked one development: the recently invented airplane. The British had a few aircraft circling the Sinai looking for any potential Ottoman attacks.

Although the force moved by night to avoid detection as well as the fierce daytime heat of the desert, even then it was impossible to hide 20,000 men from the prying eyes of observers in the

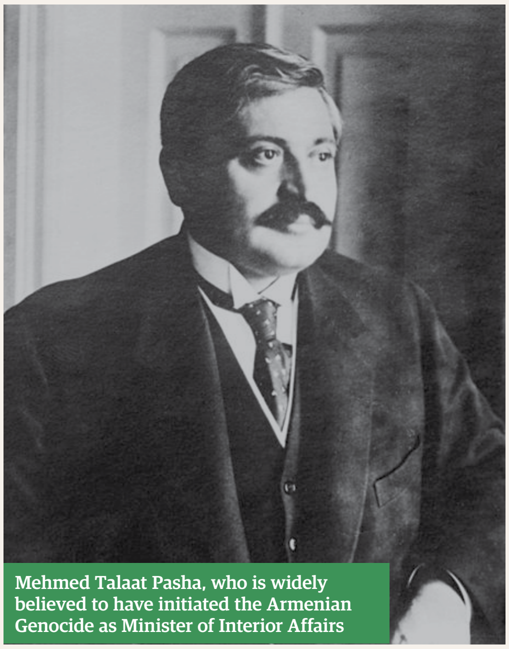


Originating in the deserts of Rajasthan, the Bikaner Camel Corps were well-prepared to fight against the Ottomans in Egypt

"THE FORCE MOVED BY NIGHT TO AVOID DETECTION, BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE 20,000 MEN FROM OBSERVERS IN THE RECENTLY INVENTED AIRPLANE"



The Goeben surrendering at the end of World War I. It had been renamed the Yavuz - note the Ottoman flag



Mehmed Talaat Pasha, who is widely believed to have initiated the Armenian Genocide as Minister of Interior Affairs

Ottoman forces were destroyed in the Battle of Megiddo (Armageddon) in 1918 aircraft, and the idea of a surprise attack failed before it had even started. The British were waiting for the raiders. Warships were anchored in the canal and used as mobile gun platforms. There was also an armoured train with artillery and heavy machine-guns on board, which could travel parallel to the canal on a pre-existing rail line.

The fighting was vicious and only a small number of Ottoman troops made it across the Suez Canal, but they were soon beaten back. The Ottoman forces retreated into the Sinai but the British failed to pursue.

All this happened a few months before the Brits launched their attack on Gallipoli. In some respects, the British attack on the Gallipoli peninsula had similarities to the Ottoman-German attack on the Suez Canal. Both plans were based on the logic that success would deal a major blow to the enemy. In the case of Suez, if Britain could be deprived of the support that came through the canal, it'd be much harder to wage long-term war in Europe. In the case of Gallipoli, if the Allied forces could land and push on the few dozen miles to the Ottoman capital, then one of the central powers would be knocked out within a year of fighting. Yet both attacks failed.

In late 1915, while hundreds of thousands of British troops were committed to Gallipoli and fighting in the Caucasus, an expeditionary force of over 30,000 Indian troops landed at Al-Faw in modern-day Iraq. There was a clash at Ctesiphon, where the British faced heavy fighting against the Ottoman defences and suffered substantial casualties but won the day. They were now committed to marching along the rivers, making their route of advance predictable, and they ended up being intercepted and besieged at Kut. The siege lasted over four months as Ottoman reinforcements tightened the noose on a British army that, after receiving one relief column of nearly 20,000 men, was now cut off from any further chance of relief. The force suffered light casualties but tens of

General Frederick von Kressenstein was one of a large number of German officers that worked with Ottoman authorities in World War I

THE OTTOMAN NEWS

Updates from the Front

1914 - 1917

DECOY SANDWICHES CAUSE CONFUSION

How some tasty sandwiches did the work of Britain's finest spies

The EEF was given some help in the form of an ingenious military intelligence officer by the name of Richard Meinertzhagen, who, despite the rather Germanic-sounding name, was not fighting for the Germans. Meinertzhagen wrapped some sandwiches in fake plans of attack and made sure the haversack with the sandwiches was found by the Ottomans. The so-called Haversack Ruse convinced von Kressenstein that the attack on Beersheba was a feint for a larger attack on Gaza. As the reinforcements had made the difference in the First Battle of Gaza, it could well be that Meinertzhagen's plan won the day (and if this sounds familiar, it was the inspiration for much the same deception in World War II, called Operation Mincemeat).

Richard Meinertzhagen was a rather dashing fellow, seen here in a stylish mac, smoking a pipe

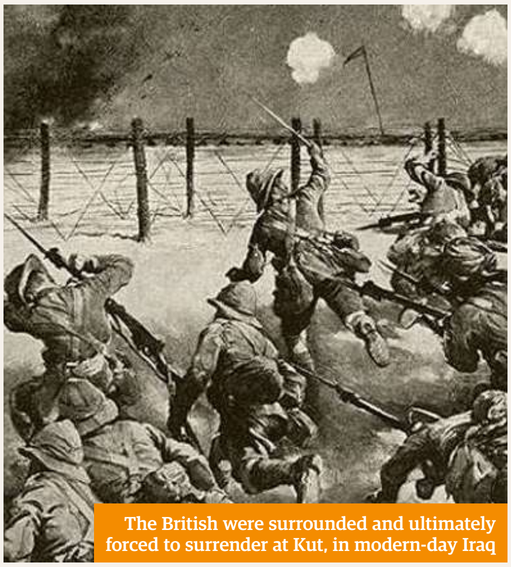
OPIUM-LACED CIGARETTES PUT DEFENDERS IN A DAZE

When you can't beat them... send them suspicious gifts to win them over

British officers question Arab villagers after the Third Battle of Gaza

Just before the Third Battle of Gaza, Meinertzhagen came up with another inspired plan. British aircraft had been flying over the area for months. If they weren't spying or bombing, they were dropping cigarettes wrapped in propaganda to encourage the defenders to quit fighting. The propaganda was largely ignored, but the cigarettes were gratefully received and, because Meinertzhagen knew the cigarettes were smoked, he ordered a special batch laced with opium to subdue the defenders. When he tried one, he was able to describe its mellowing effects.

The opium cigarettes were dropped and, just a few hours later, the British began their assault. It is not known exactly to what degree the drugged tobacco made a difference to the defence of Gaza (much like the fake plans at Beersheba), but what had been a tough nut to crack in the first two battles was won in a day of fighting in early November 1917.



The British were surrounded and ultimately forced to surrender at Kut, in modern-day Iraq

thousands of British soldiers were now prisoners of war. It was a humiliation for the Brits and another sign that the Ottomans were far from finished. The news of the capitulation at Kut was almost simultaneous with the retreat from the Gallipoli peninsula. The fight with the Ottoman Empire was not the easy victory Britain had expected.

In March of 1917, General Sir Archibald Murray amassed thousands of British imperial troops to break out into the Middle East proper through the town of Gaza, then held by von Kressenstein. Murray led what was known as the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) and surrounded the key city, where he launched an all-out assault. It failed and there would end up being three Battles of Gaza before victory went to the EEF in November 1917.

Nearly a year later, the EEF pushed further north until they met one of the last remaining Ottoman field armies at Megiddo in September 1918. The industrial scale of death throughout the war made many British soldiers conclude that the blood-drenched imagery in the Bible's book of Revelations might be coming true. Part of the prophecy described a mighty battle at Armageddon; Megiddo translates to Armageddon in English, so they were uneasy about fighting there, fearing they might be witnessing the 'end of days'.

While the prophecy wasn't true, it certainly was Armageddon for the Ottomans, including Mustafa Kemal, who'd secured the Ottoman-Turkish victory at Gallipoli. For the 35,000 men on the Ottoman side, supported by over 400 artillery pieces, the battle was a disaster. General Edmund Allenby (who had replaced Murray) used a creeping barrage to cover the advance of his troops, including an impressive cavalry charge. The Desert Mounted Corps managed to get behind Ottoman lines and attack from the rear as the main force charged in from the front. Of the 35,000 Ottoman soldiers at the battle, only 6,000 avoided being killed, wounded or captured. It was the biggest defeat the Ottomans suffered in WWI and, on 30 October, the Armistice of Mudros ended hostilities in the Middle East, a few weeks before the war ended in Europe.

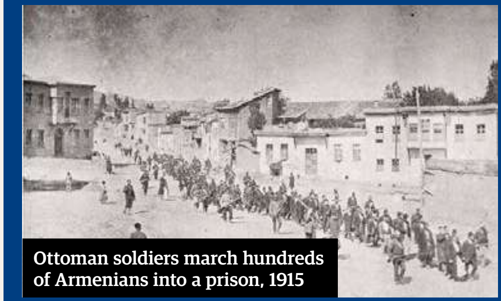
THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The forced deportations and brutal executions of Armenians at Ottoman hands is known as one of the earliest examples of genocide – but controversy still rages on

One of the most hotly debated topics arising from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire is the question of what terminology should be used to describe the massacres of the Armenians. Some countries have formally classified this as genocide, whereas others have avoided such recognition.

What is undisputed is that the Christian Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire during WWI were singled out, rounded up and either executed or forced to leave the Empire in what is an undeniable example of ethnic cleansing. Of the hundreds of thousands of civilians who were expelled, tens of thousands died of starvation and the hardships they were forced to endure. Of the 1.5 million Armenians living in the Empire before WWI, there were only 400,000 by 1922.

As punishment for resisting their Ottoman overlords, the Armenians were targeted (along with Greek and Syrian minority populations) by the authorities. On April 24, 1915, about 250 Armenian intellectuals and influential figures were rounded up and arrested. Over the following months, many of them died in custody. As Ottoman defeats in World War I mounted, the authorities grew more concerned that the Armenians could be convinced to work with the enemy. If they could not be converted to Islam and forced to give up their national identity, they posed a serious threat to Turkish homogeny. So, it was decided that Armenian men, women and children (regardless of age or ability) would be deported from their homeland in the Caucasus to the deserts of Syria. The march was thousands of miles long, and nobody was really expected to survive.



Ottoman soldiers march hundreds of Armenians into a prison, 1915

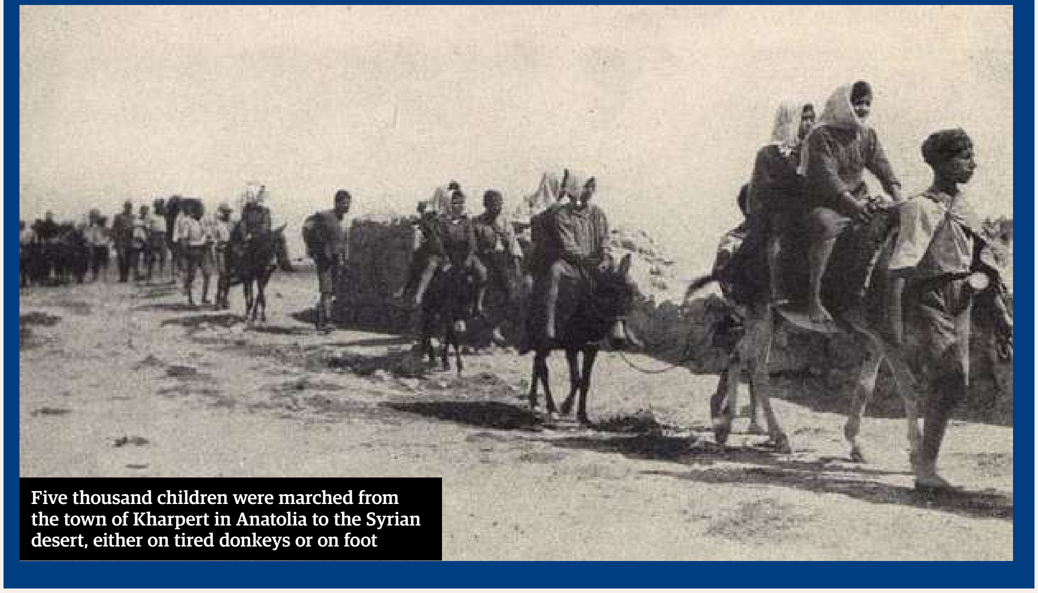
Desperate Armenian women and children pick at a horse carcass to feed themselves, Syria

The deportations resulted in the deaths of up to a million people – of exhaustion, thirst or being attacked on the journey by hostile mobs and corrupt soldiers. If anyone made it to the Syrian desert, they were placed in concentration camps and worked to death by Ottoman guards. In an era of increasingly global media, many foreign journalists, politicians and missionaries saw the horrors of the genocide and reported it back home. Henry Morgenthau, the US ambassador in Constantinople, co-ordinated a fundraising effort that raised $100million (the equivalent of $1billion today) for the refugees.

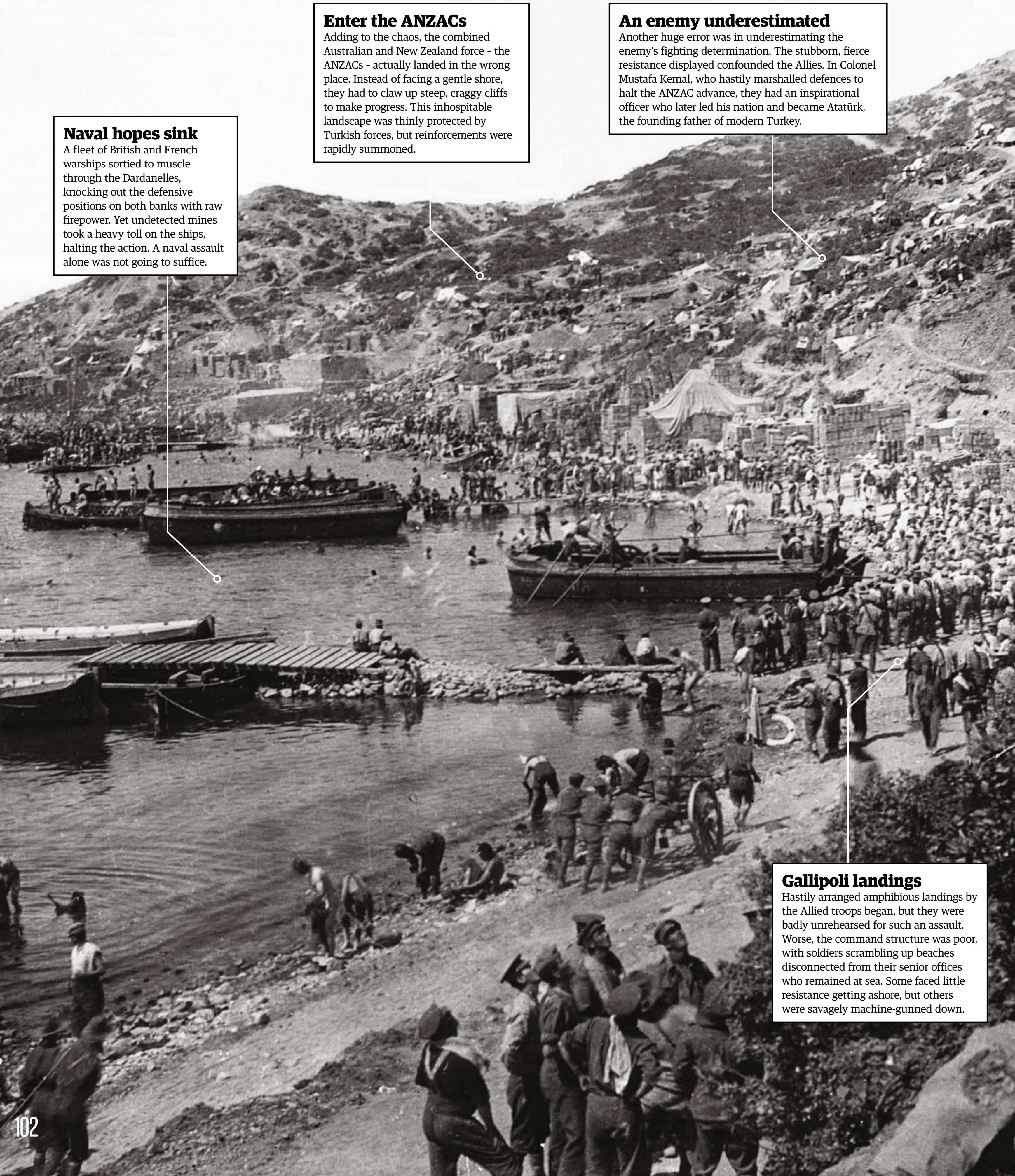
Yet despite being witnessed by the whole world, 100 years later it's still being debated whether the ethnic cleansing of Armenians fits the definition of 'genocide'. Although the word 'genocide' itself was coined by a man who was studying the Armenian case (Raphael Lemkin), it's argued that the persecution of Armenian people was not systematic or overly specific – it all happened in the context of war. Turkey and its neighbour Azerbaijan argue that it was certainly an atrocity, but not deliberate genocide.

The rest of the world is divided over the issue. While many countries (including Russia, Syria, Canada and most of Western Europe) have formally recognised the events of 1915-1916 as genocide proper, others are concerned about harming their relationship with Turkey. Britain and the US, despite having significant Armenian communities, have long refused to officially term it a 'genocide'.

The debate rages on, but Armenians around the world continue to campaign for recognition of their ancestors' persecution, even more than a century later.



Five thousand children were marched from the town of Kharpert in Anatolia to the Syrian desert, either on tired donkeys or on foot



Naval hopes sink

A fleet of British and French warships sortied to muscle through the Dardanelles, knocking out the defensive positions on both banks with raw firepower. Yet undetected mines took a heavy toll on the ships, halting the action. A naval assault alone was not going to suffice.

Enter the ANZACs

Adding to the chaos, the combined Australian and New Zealand force – the ANZACs – actually landed in the wrong place. Instead of facing a gentle shore, they had to claw up steep, craggy cliffs to make progress. This inhospitable landscape was thinly protected by Turkish forces, but reinforcements were rapidly summoned.

An enemy underestimated

Another huge error was in underestimating the enemy's fighting determination. The stubborn, fierce resistance displayed confounded the Allies. In Colonel Mustafa Kemal, who hastily marshalled defences to halt the ANZAC advance, they had an inspirational officer who later led his nation and became Atatürk, the founding father of modern Turkey.

Gallipoli landings

Hastily arranged amphibious landings by the Allied troops began, but they were badly unrehearsed for such an assault. Worse, the command structure was poor, with soldiers scrambling up beaches disconnected from their senior offices who remained at sea. Some faced little resistance getting ashore, but others were savagely machine-gunned down.

Digging in
The ANZACs in their first campaign fought magnificently against an unyielding enemy. Down the coast at Cape Helles, British and French troops faced the same ferocious opponents enjoying the favourable high ground. The Allies were pinned down on two beachheads, and in the summer heat, a brutal trench warfare began…

THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN

Gallipoli Peninsula, February 1915 – January 1916

With the war on the Western Front heavily bogged down in stalemate trench conflict, other avenues were sought to attack and undermine the Central Powers. When Britain's ally Russia asked for help in repelling the Turkish forces of the Ottoman Empire – fighting alongside Germany and Austria – a tantalising opportunity to outflank the enemy presented itself.

If the Dardanelles could be opened, allowing Constantinople to be captured, Turkey would be cut in two, severing supply lines from Germany. A divided Turkey faced elimination from the war and there would be relief for Russia, with a supply route to and from it opened up.

As a strategy, it made sense. In terms of execution, it was incredibly difficult to achieve. Detailed planning, a well-trained assault force with strong reserves, and an efficient, forward-thinking command structure were the minimum needed to secure a foothold on a hostile coastline and then push inland. Unfortunately, the Gallipoli Campaign had none of the above.

Winston Churchill championed the strategy in the war cabinet, urging a speedy naval assault. The might of British and French warships was considered sufficient to bombard and destroy the Turkish forts guarding the Dardanelles, opening up the Sea of Marmara and Constantinople. There was initial success, but bad weather slowed the mission. When mines inflicted heavy losses as the Navy tried to rush through the straits, it became clear that the peninsula could not be taken without a land assault.

Command of the expeditionary force was given to General Sir Ian Hamilton. He had British and French troops, but also Australians and New Zealanders, or ANZACs, who were largely untested in battle. Landings were made at Cape Helles and what later became known as ANZAC Cove. However, Hamilton and his two beach commanders stayed at sea, too far from the action to communicate properly with their forces. This mismanagement led to many errors, particularly with the ANZACs, who faced little resistance at first but were not commanded properly, in order to exploit that advantage.

Another mistake was underestimating how doggedly committed the Ottoman Turks would be in defending their positions. Heavy losses were inflicted at Cape Helles, where five landings took place, but only three could be held. When attempts were made to press inland from there, the attacks were beaten back and Turkish reinforcements soon arrived to halt the belated ANZAC advance.

Over the next three months, grisly trench warfare set in. Disease in the cramped conditions became as deadly as sniper fire. Attempting to break out, Hamilton landed fresh troops at Suvla Bay. But again, poor leadership squandered the opportunity of the surprise attack and when Turkish resistance was mustered, that push inland was halted too.

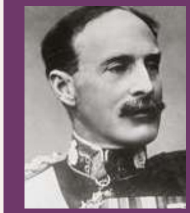
At all three beachheads, the Turks held the advantageous higher ground. For the Allies, confidence in the mission was evaporating back home. In October, Hamilton was replaced by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Monro, who quickly called for evacuation. Winston Churchill later witheringly summed up Monro's attitude by declaring: "He came, he saw, he capitulated." Yet with a bitterly cold November claiming frostbite victims, it really was the only course of action.

The campaign's final act, the evacuation itself, was superbly orchestrated with scarcely any addition to already grim casualty figures. It was the smallest of triumphs at the end of a truly disastrous campaign.

ALLIED FORCE

TROOPS 5 divisions rising to 16 divisions

CASUALTIES 215,000-250,000 (estimated)



GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON
LEADER

Although a professional soldier with a long service record of campaigns fought abroad, Hamilton lacked knowledge of Turkey and its army.

STRENGTHS Strategically competent with a strong belief that his men would prevail.

WEAKNESS Remote from the action and reluctant to openly direct subordinate officers.

THE ANZACS
KEY UNIT

A combined Australian and New Zealand force, the bravery and commitment of these men during the campaign burned deeply into both nations' psyche.

STRENGTHS Spirited and gutsy combatants resourcefully tackling their inhospitable conditions.

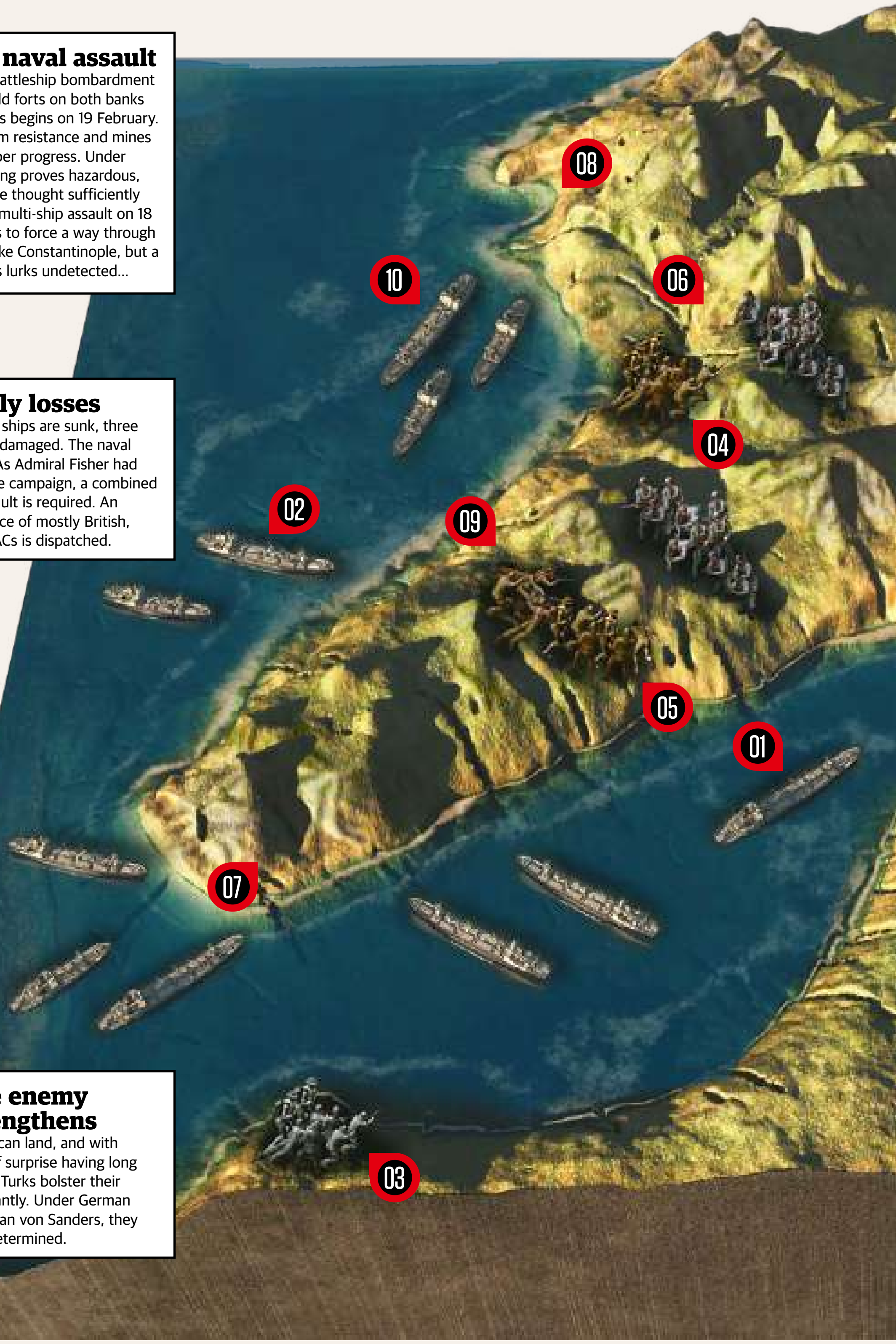
WEAKNESS Being their debut in warfare, they were untried in battle.

DECEPTION
KEY WEAPON

During the evacuation, those remaining ran along trenches firing from different points and left 'drip rifles' to confuse the enemy.

STRENGTHS In darkness with sacking muffling boots, thousands were secretly evacuated.

WEAKNESS Had the enemy attacked, ANZAC Cove would have fallen quickly.



01 The naval assault

Allied battleship bombardment of the Turkish-held forts on both banks of the Dardanelles begins on 19 February. Poor weather, firm resistance and mines in the strait hamper progress. Under fire, mine-sweeping proves hazardous, but the waters are thought sufficiently clear to launch a multi-ship assault on 18 March. The aim is to force a way through the channel to take Constantinople, but a new line of mines lurks undetected…

02 Early losses

Three ships are sunk, three more are heavily damaged. The naval action is halted. As Admiral Fisher had argued before the campaign, a combined land and sea assault is required. An expeditionary force of mostly British, French and ANZACs is dispatched.

03 The enemy strengthens

Before the force can land, and with any semblance of surprise having long disappeared, the Turks bolster their numbers significantly. Under German General Otto Liman von Sanders, they are ferociously determined.

04 All at sea

The Allied force lands on 25 April. It is poorly trained for landing on beaches overlooked by steep cliffs, which offer the enemy ideal defensive positions. Worse still, the high command of the force remains at sea, unable to respond or give orders to the units as they scramble ashore.

05 Slaughter and chaos

At 'V' beach at Cape Helles, large numbers of men put ashore are cut down by machine guns on the cliffs. Elsewhere, other units land without resistance and, receiving no orders to press forward, simply hold their positions. The ANZACs actually land at the wrong beach, though still make progress towards the Chunuk Bair Ridge. Unfortunately, there they encounter a brilliant adversary, the formidable Colonel Mustafa Kemal, who halts their advance.

10 Evacuation

The final act of the campaign is the only part of it that goes well. Under cover of night, and using clever deception tactics, Suvla Bay and ANZAC Cove are cleared of men and artillery over ten days in December. Cape Helles is evacuated by early January. Official figures quote just three casualties for the entire withdrawal operation – a merciful conclusion to an ill-planned, ill-commanded, ill-fated endeavour.

09 Continue or curtail

General Sir Ian Hamilton lobbies to battle on but is replaced in October by Lieutenant-General Monro. He recommends evacuation, but Kitchener waits, wanting to see for himself. Meanwhile, misery for the men is compounded when many suffer frostbite in a bitterly cold November. When Kitchener sees conditions on the peninsula, withdrawal is sanctioned.

07 Two beachheads, no progress

Just as on the Western Front, it's trench warfare. Attempts are made to push forward from the beachheads at Cape Helles and Ari Burnu – later renamed ANZAC Cove – but all fail. Likewise, the stubbornly resistant Turks cannot force the Allies back into the sea. In the summer heat of May, June and July, putrefying corpses from both sides litter the battlefields. Disease, particularly dysentery, is the new enemy.

06 Deadlock

After the haphazard, disjointed landings, the resistance faced is fierce. Attacks and counter-attacks across the craggy, ridged terrain achieve little except to swell the numbers of casualties. Both sides dig in.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

TROOPS 6 divisions rising to 16 divisions

CASUALTIES 250,000-300,000 (estimated)

GENERAL OTTO LIMAN von SANDERS LEADER

Von Sanders was made head of the German military mission to Turkey in 1913, commanding its army once it entered the war.

STRENGTHS Foresaw the importance of defences along the Dardanelles and strengthened accordingly.

WEAKNESS Deployed troops inadequately to meet a coastal invasion threat.

57th REGIMENT KEY UNIT

Following Kemal's command "I do not order you to attack, I order you to die!" it halted the ANZAC breakout from ANZAC Cove.

STRENGTHS The regiment fought tenaciously, holding the line with bayonets and valour.

WEAKNESS Poorly equipped and lacking ammunition.

NAVAL MINES KEY WEAPON

Seeking a 'Trafalgar' moment, the sea-based campaign to seize Constantinople via the Dardanelles ended after mines sank three ships and holed more.

STRENGTHS Undetected, one mine can cause fatal damage to a ship.

WEAKNESS An untargeted weapon that good mine-sweeping will easily neutralise.

WHAT IF...
THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE HAD JOINED THE ALLIES IN WWI?

After the defeat of the Balkan Wars, the Ottomans sought alliances with both the Allies and the Central Powers. But what if Germany had refused?

Written by Yücel Yanıkdağ

Having stood on their own against several enemies in the Balkan Wars, the Young Turks in power vowed to actively seek an alliance in 1914. The Ottoman minister of war, Enver Pasha, orchestrated an alliance with Germany. However, had his request for a treaty been declined by Berlin, Russia would have quickly reconsidered allying with the Ottomans.

Suspecting Kaiser Wilhelm II would attempt to accept the Ottoman alliance offer with the intention of persuading Istanbul to declare jihad against the Entente, Sergei Sazanov, the Russian foreign minister, would convince London and Paris to sign an alliance, closing the deal just as war broke out. Despite Russia's allies seeing Turkey as a liability, Sazanov believed it was preferable to have Turkey on their side rather than the side of Germany.

With an alliance secured, the Ottomans declared mobilisation, but because of inadequate industrialisation and transportation, this took three months. The Allies would not have expected much, since their real aim would be to keep the Ottomans away from the Germans. Sharing no borders with Germany or Austria-Hungary, the Ottomans would eventually send a token expeditionary force comprising three army corps to the Western Front. Ottoman Mehmetçik ('Little Mehmed') in Europe would be armed and equipped by France and Britain. When the Russians found themselves bogged down against the German offensive in April 1915, they would have asked Istanbul for reinforcements against Austria-Hungary. When the Russian supplies and food ran short in the late summer of 1915, the Turkish Straits would have become a lifeline for Russia as Istanbul could allow supply ships to pass through, preventing another revolution in Russia like that in 1905.

When Syria, Lebanon and Palestine were hit with a major locust plague in 1915, the Ottoman government, aided by its allies, would send foodstuffs to the region to avoid a major famine. Istanbul looking after its citizens in the Arab provinces would no doubt make the people of the region more loyal to the state. In fact, this would even cause the small group of Arab nationalists who saw the war as an opportune time to declare a revolt for their independence to postpone their plans until the famine was over.

Undoubtedly concerned that the Allies had post-war designs on the empire, the Young Turks would endeavour to appear more useful to the war effort. Thus, upon persuading Bulgaria to join the Allies in October 1915, Enver Pasha would suggest a joint attack on Austria-Hungary through occupied Serbian territory. The plan would only be activated when Romania also joined the Allies. A small contingent of Ottomans would join its newest allies to invade Austria-Hungary from the south and east.

With no need to station troops in Egypt, London would send many more thousands - Anzac and Indian Army soldiers - to the Western Front. With a well-supplied and strengthened Russia on the Eastern Front and heavy concentrations of troops on the Western Front, Germany and Austria-Hungary would soon realise the futility of continuing. Just as the Americans were considering entering, the war would come to an end in 1917.

HOW WOULD IT BE DIFFERENT?

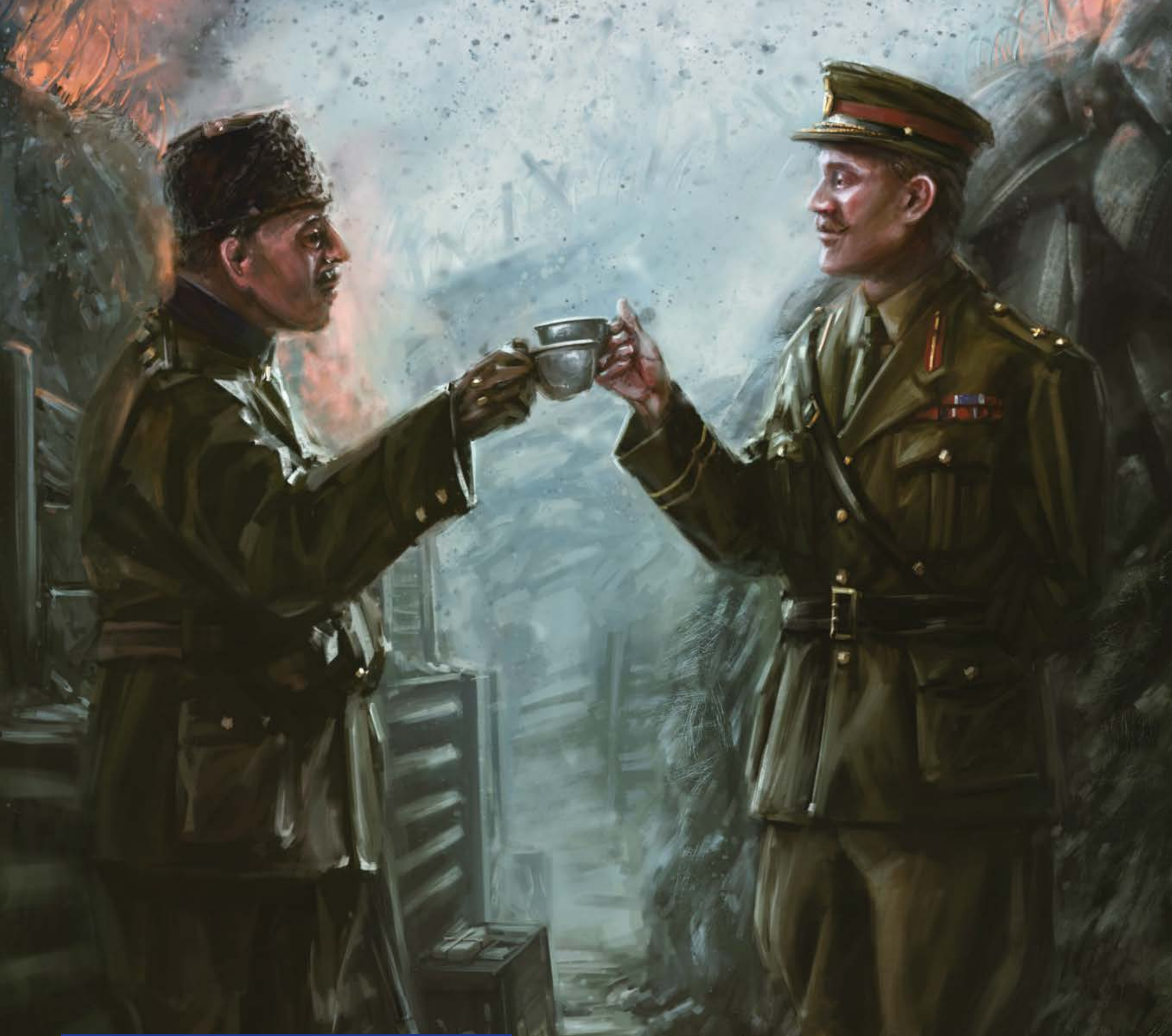
The Ottoman Empire joins the Allies
Though leaning more towards siding with Germany, the Ottomans make an alliance with the Allies. **31 July 1914**

Von Sanders asked to leave
Under pressure from its allies, the Sublime Porte, the central government of the Ottoman Empire, asks the German military mission headed by General Liman von Sanders to leave Istanbul. **9 August 1914**

Ottomans on the Western Front
As the two sides dig in, Ottoman Mehmetçik head to the Western Front. Intending to use them minimally, the French discover the Germans had made significant advances in training Ottoman soldiers. **October 1914**

Lifeline to Russia: Turkish Straits
As Russian supplies and food run short in the face of a German offensive, they request help from their allies. Convoys of cargo ships pass through the Turkish Straits to relieve them. **Summer 1915**

Locust plague
Locusts strip away all vegetation from Palestine to Syria, causing widespread famine. French and British ships join Ottomans in delivering supplies to limit the lives lost. **March-October 1915**



With the Ottomans allying with the Entente powers, British and Turkish troops would have fought side by side in the trenches

Yücel Yanikdag

Associate professor of history and international studies at the University of Richmond in Virginia, USA, Yücel Yanıkdağ specialises in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic. His book, *Healing The Nation: Ottoman Prisoners Of War, Nationalism And Medicine In Turkey, 1914-1939*, was published in 2013 by Edinburgh University Press.

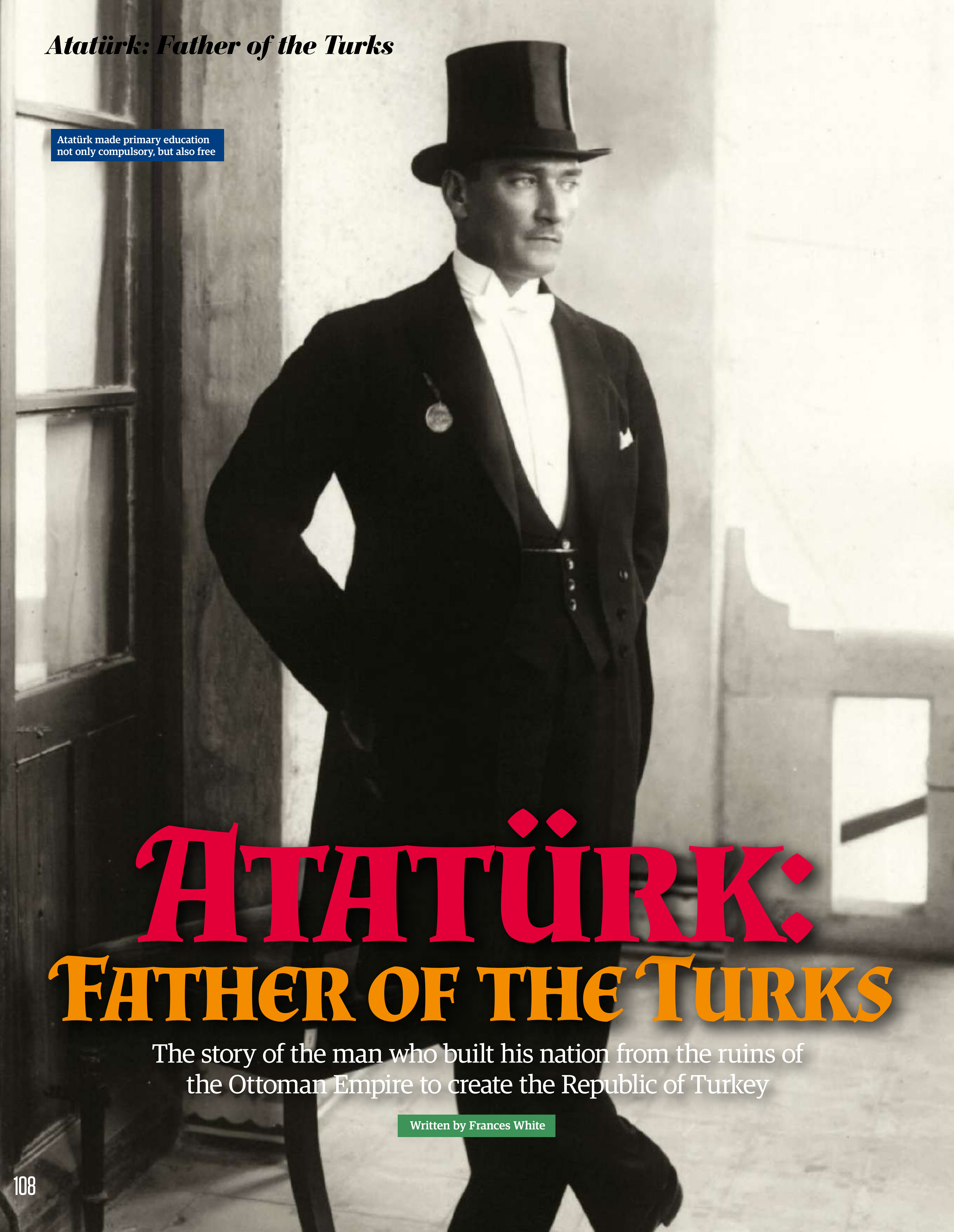
Bulgaria joins the Allies
The Ottomans had feared that Bulgaria might join the Central Powers and attack Istanbul to close the Straits to Allied shipping to Russia. The news they have joined the Allies is welcomed by the Young Turks. **11 October 1915**

Romania enters the war
After being put under pressure by Russia, Romania enters the war with hopes of gaining Austrian territory for its effort.
May 1916

Bulgarian-Romanian-Ottoman attack on Austria-Hungary
The three Balkan allies attack Austria-Hungary through Serbia and Romania. Austro-Hungarians face great difficulty fighting both against the Russians and their new enemies. **29 June 1916**

Germany surrenders and the war ends
Facing insurmountable odds, a well-supplied Russia and stiff resistance on the Western Front, Germany decides that it cannot continue to fight on two distant fronts. The war comes to an end.
1 September 1917

© Ian Hinley



Atatürk made primary education not only compulsory, but also free

ATATÜRK: FATHER OF THE TURKS

The story of the man who built his nation from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire to create the Republic of Turkey

Written by Frances White

Today one image dominates the Turkish landscape. Dazzling blue eyes stare down from the walls of hospitals, government buildings, schools and even family homes: the eyes of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The man's legacy in modern-day Turkey is undeniable, with bronze statues adorning even the most remote villages. Atatürk became a legend when he rescued Turkey from the defeated and crumbling Ottoman Empire, resisted the invading Greek forces and led his people to form a modern republic of Turkey. He was the father of modern Turkey. For many Turks today, Atatürk is a sacred figure, a being from myth and legend that his people can still rally behind. But before he was a legend, he was an ordinary man, driven by a love of his country and a determination to see it succeed. Without his journey and struggle, it is nigh-on impossible to imagine what Turkey would be today.

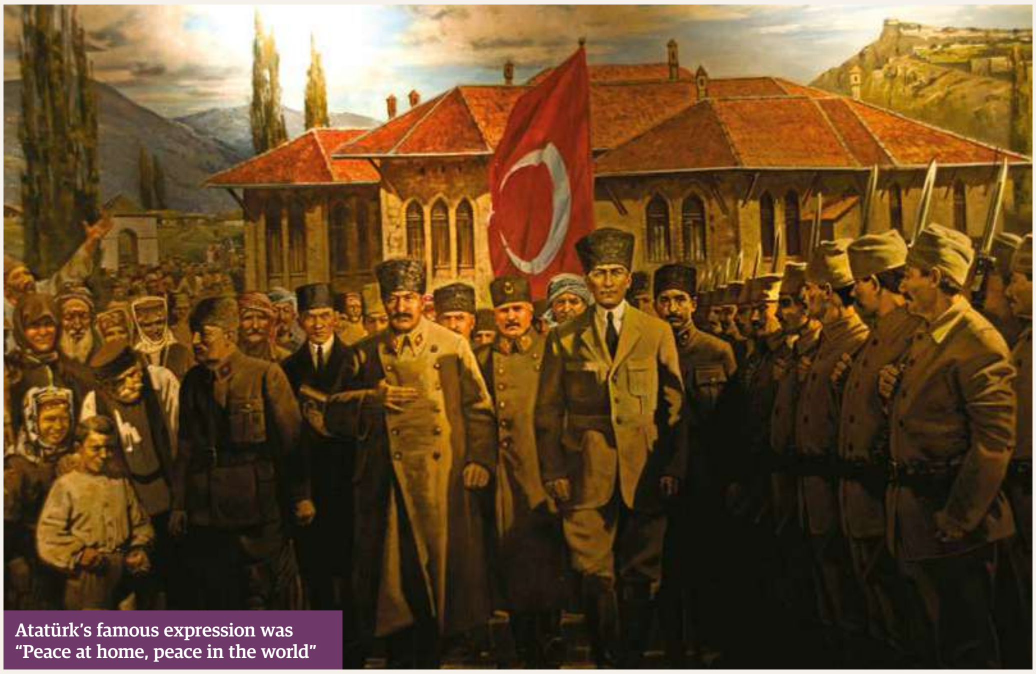
Atatürk was born in 1881, simply as 'Mustafa' in a time when surnames were not used in the Ottoman Empire. He was born in Salonica (now Thessaloniki), a thriving port of the empire. His father, Ali Rıza had been a lieutenant of a local militia, and his mother hailed from a farming community. The two parents seemed somewhat at odds with what they wanted for their son: while his mother would have preferred Atatürk follow the traditional religious path, his father had other plans. He hung his sword above his son's cradle, and ensured he attended a secular school, opening his son's mind and setting him down the path of modernisation which would dominate not only Atatürk's life, but also the life of every Turk of his era. Atatürk's father died when he was only seven, but the man would have a profound effect on his son's life.

Enamoured with the idea of a military career, even at a young age, Atatürk defied his mother and entered a military secondary school. While there he received the nickname of Kemal, meaning 'perfect one', due to his academic abilities. He went on to the military school in Monastir, and entered the War College in Istanbul in 1899. While undergoing studies there Atatürk became aware of political dissent against the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Atatürk became involved in a clandestine newspaper. Although his activities were uncovered he still completed the course, graduating in the top ten of his class. He then went on to the General Staff College where he graduated as a captain and one of the empire's most promising young officers.

Despite the prestige his graduation gave him, Atatürk found himself drawn to anti-empire groups. He and his friends would gather to discuss political abuses within the empire, and when the group was discovered, and its members dispersed, Atatürk watched with anger as corrupt officials abused local people. He flitted between anti-government groups – as one was disbanded he would create or join another – from the Society of Fatherland and Freedom to the Committee of Union and Progress to the Young Turk movement. In July of 1908 he was part of the Young Turk insurrection that stripped the sultan's powers and re-established a government.

Non-Turkish minorities were pressured to speak Turkish in public under Atatürk's presidency

> "ATATÜRK'S FATHER WOULD HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON HIS SON'S LIFE"



Atatürk's famous expression was "Peace at home, peace in the world"

The hero of this revolution was Ismail Enver, a man who would become one of Atatürk's greatest rivals. Enver believed in centralisation and Turkish control, but Atatürk felt that the military, after having gained what it wanted politically, should no longer interfere in politics. Atatürk encouraged all officers who wished to pursue political careers to resign from the military. However, this only served to increase the hostility of Enver and his followers towards Atatürk. Facing a powerful backlash, Atatürk returned his attention to what he knew best – the military. He spoke out about the training of the army, and translated German training manuals into Turkish. He began to gain respect from powerful military officers, as well as the ambitious young officers rising through the ranks. All these men would later play an important part in supporting Atatürk and his plans for the Turkish nation.

Enver and his followers, known as the CUP, were not so keen on Atatürk's rising popularity and power. He was transferred out of the way on field command, and denied promotion after promotion. Enver was determined to keep his opposition out of sight and out of power. But Atatürk was not so easy to keep down. He proved his bravery fighting in the Italo-Turkish War in 1911, and again in 1912 to 1913 in the Balkan Wars. During the first Balkan War the Ottoman Empire rapidly lost most of its territory in Europe, prompting masses of refugees to pour into Istanbul, including Atatürk's own mother, sister and stepfather. The Second Balkan War saw the Ottomans regain some of their lost territory, and Atatürk was promoted to lieutenant colonel for his role in it.

When WWI broke out and the Ottomans allied with the Central powers, Atatürk saw it as a chance to assume a military command, which Enver reluctantly gave him with the 19th Division in the Gallipoli Peninsula. His bravery and military prowess here contributed to thwarting the Allied invasion of the Dardanelles. Atatürk was also almost seriously injured by a piece of shrapnel, which lodged in the watch in his breast pocket. His success at Gallipoli thrust Atatürk into legendary status, dubbing him the 'Saviour of Istanbul'. Even Enver couldn't deny his abilities now, and Atatürk received promotion after promotion, even receiving the honorific title of 'pasha'.

Despite his success, Atatürk began to become disillusioned with the Ottoman army when he was placed in command of the Seventh Army in Syria. He was so appalled by the state of the army he resigned and returned to Istanbul, where he fell ill. During this time Sultan Mehmed V died and was replaced by Mehmed VI. Enver conspired to get Atatürk assigned in Syria again, and when Atatürk returned he found the situation even worse than he had left

Atatürk met with King Edward VIII in Istanbul on 4 September 1936

FIFTEEN CENTS
TIME
The Weekly News-Magazine
MUSTAPHA KEMAL PASHA
VOL. I. NO. 4
MARCH 24, 1923

Atatürk was featured on the cover of Time magazine in 1923

it, withdrawing his forces to save as many lives in the collapsing army as he could. Fighting came to a halt by the Armistice of Mudros in 1918, and Enver and his friends in the CUP fled to Germany, leaving the sultan in charge. The sultan agreed to cooperate with the allies, who took control of the government, as well as a lot of Ottoman territory. The allied forces swiftly began claiming whatever territory they could, in a worryingly imperialistic fashion.

Atatürk meanwhile, watched as Istanbul was occupied by British, French and Italian troops. Greatly affected by the scene, he became determined to oust them from the city he loved. He met with trusted allies to formulate a plan to save Turkey. The Turks had already begun to take matters into their own hands, with armed conflicts happening throughout the city. The allies wanted this squashed, and the sultan recommended Atatürk be sent as a trusted inspector general. Atatürk used this to his advantage, swaying his pull with the sultan to get him to bestow him with extensive powers. Atatürk had bided his time, playing the good soldier, but now it was time to act.

On 19 May 1919 Atatürk landed at Samsun, on the coast of Anatolia. Although he had been sent to restore order, he abandoned this, heading straight for Amasya. There he proclaimed to a rapturous crowd that the sultan was a prisoner of the allies, and he, Atatürk, had come for one purpose - to stop the nation from slipping from the hands of its own people. It was an incredibly bold move from Atatürk; the man had built up a reputation as a good, loyal soldier. But he played all his hands in one brutal swoop. The Allies demanded the sultan recall him, but Atatürk ignored all orders. The sultan called for his arrest, and ordered all governors to ignore him.

Atatürk responded by resigning from the army. Now a civilian with no official status or military support, he appealed to General Kâzım Karabekir, commander of an army corps of 18,000 men. Kâzım was convinced by Atatürk, and the battle for independence truly began. Elected as head of a provisional government and constantly resisting arrest, Atatürk and his new government directly went up against the sultan's own government. When the Treaty of Sévres was signed on 10 August 1920, the Ottoman state was massively reduced in size, but Atatürk demanded complete independence for Turkey. The new Turkish parliament, known as the Great National Assembly, continued to engage in conflict with the occupying Greek and Armenian forces. Finally, after three years of struggle, on 24 July 1923 Atatürk signed the treaty of Lausanne, which established the Republic of Turkey with Atatürk as its first president. Through sheer grit, determination and lust for freedom, Atatürk had finally given Turkey control of its own territory and sovereignty.

Atatürk had big plans for his country beyond its independence. He wanted to bring it into the 20th century, and immediately embarked on a journey of dramatic reform. The Turkey Atatürk envisioned was a self-sufficient, industrialised state, a country in a constant state of revolution, constantly changing, constantly improving, never remaining static. Atatürk went about doing this by carefully studying Western governments and adapting their structure. He established state secularism, separating the government from religion, and the religious schools and courts were

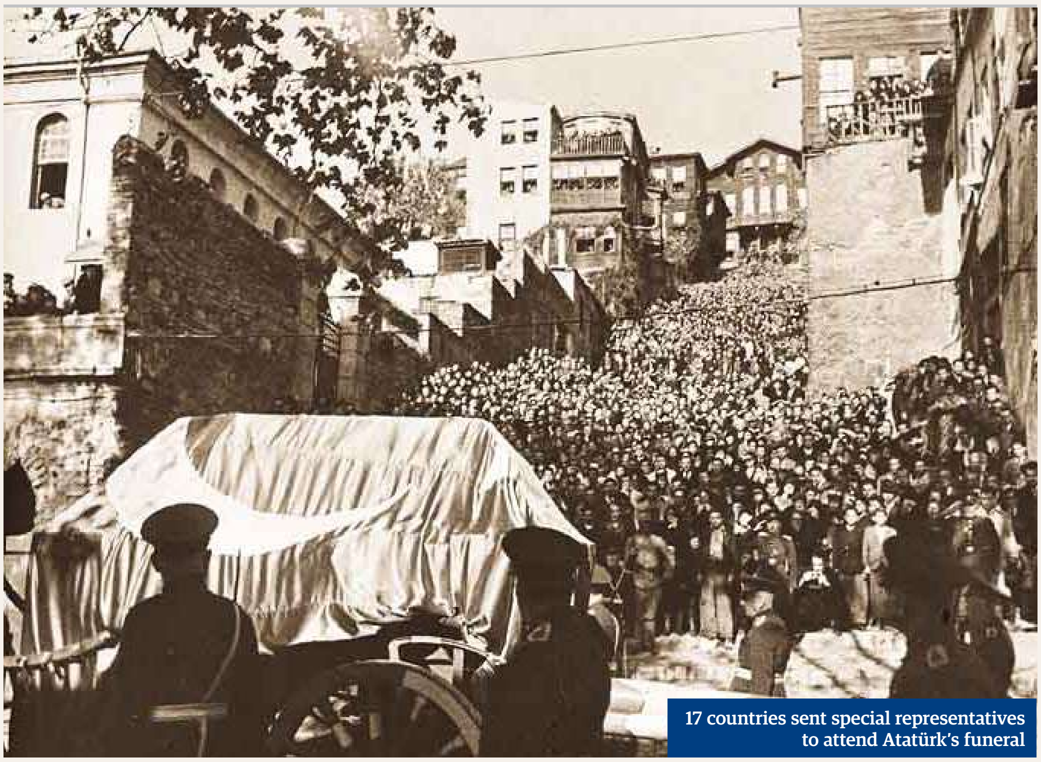
THE TWO LEADERS

The friendship that unified two enemy nations

Both Atatürk and the Greek post-war leader, Eleftherios Venizelos, were eager to reconcile the severely fractured relationship between their two countries. It was an incredibly tricky situation. The tension between the two nations was historic and, some believed, impossible to overcome. Both men faced extreme opposition to their desire to establish normal relations from their own people. Atatürk in particular was quick to erase any illusion to their past animosity, demanding a painting showing a Turkish soldier killing a Greek one be taken down and calling it a 'revolting scene.'

With careful negotiations the two sides reached an agreement on 30 April 1930, with Greece renouncing all claims over Turkish territory. Later that year in October a treaty of friendship was signed, something unthinkable only a few years prior. This undoubtedly had a lot to do with the friendship and mutual respect between the two men. Venizelos even put Atatürk's name forward for the Nobel Peace Prize. The German chancellor described the new alliance as "the greatest achievement seen in Europe since the end of the Great War".

Here, Atatürk (centre) hosted Venizelos (left) in 1932 once an agreement had been reached and relations improved



17 countries sent special representatives to attend Atatürk's funeral

dismantled. More traditional Turkish dress, such as wearing the fez, was prohibited, and Atatürk himself wore a European-style hat as an example for his people. Religious brotherhoods, which had traditionally been strongholds of conservatism, were also outlawed.

Atatürk encouraged the emancipation of women. As well as marrying a Western-educated woman himself, in 1934 women were also given the vote for parliamentary members and became eligible to hold seats in parliament for the first time. He also removed women's veiling laws and a multitude of other laws, encouraging equality between the sexes. This led to the entire system of Islamic law, which had dominated the nation for centuries, being discarded in favour of the models set by the Swiss civil code, Italian penal code and German commercial code. Polygamy became illegal, marriage became a civil contract and divorce a civil action, leading to much more freedom for women in Turkey.

Atatürk made Western-style hats compulsory for civil servants

Another massive reform was the replacement of the Arabic script by the Latin alphabet in November of 1928. As it fit the Turkish language better and made it easier to read, this led to Turkey achieving one of the highest literacy rates in the entire Middle East. Atatürk himself visited the countryside with a chalk and blackboard to show the Turkish people the new alphabet. Education across the country boomed, with the youth given unprecedented access to Western scientific teachings. Another reform that changed the lives of all the Turks was the formal adoption of surnames in 1934. This is actually what gave Atatürk the name we all know him by now, meaning 'Father of the Turks'.

With domestic reforms steaming ahead, Atatürk then focused on Turkey's foreign policy. He reached an agreement with Great Britain in a treaty which agreed Turkey would renounce claims to Mosul in exchange for 10 per cent interest of the oil produced there. Relations with Greece were also improved by a treaty of friendship signed on 25 October 1930, where minority populations were exchanged between the two nations, existing military issues resolved and borders established.

All these changes did not happen without opposition. The process of state secularism was particularly controversial, with some believing all the reforms were destroying pillars of culture and traditions that had survived for centuries. In 1925 there was a revolt by the Kurds in southwestern Anatolia in the name of Islam. Not only did it take months to quell, but the leader was hanged. Also executed were 13 ringleaders of a political plot to assassinate Atatürk.

However, on the whole the country was behind Atatürk and his goals for their society. As more aims were achieved there was a call for the regime to become more democratic, an idea that Atatürk encouraged until the opposition party created became overwhelmingly popular and he had to swiftly squash it or risk losing his grip on power.

Over time Atatürk grew more distant and, having always been a heavy drinker and light eater, his health began to rapidly decline. He was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver too late to recover from, and on 10 November 1938 he passed away. His state funeral was a huge affair, with an overwhelming outpouring of grief from his people. A mausoleum in Ankara was created to house his remains, alongside a museum dedicated to his achievements.

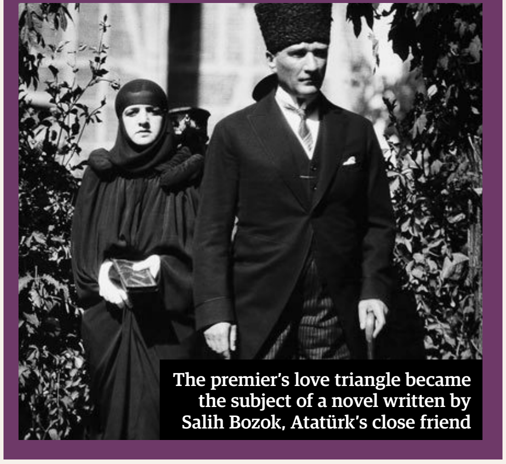
Today Atatürk remains just as much a powerful presence in Turkey as in his own lifetime. His portrait hangs in almost every home and place of business, as well as adorning bank notes, while his words are immortalised on buildings. His name holds so much weight that politicians, regardless of their political leanings, claim to be a modern-day Atatürk, continuing his work today. Even 80 years after his death, Atatürk remains the poster boy for Turkish politics, a man who became the 'cement of the Turkish nation' at a time when everything threatened to crumble around them.

MAN BEHIND THE MYTH

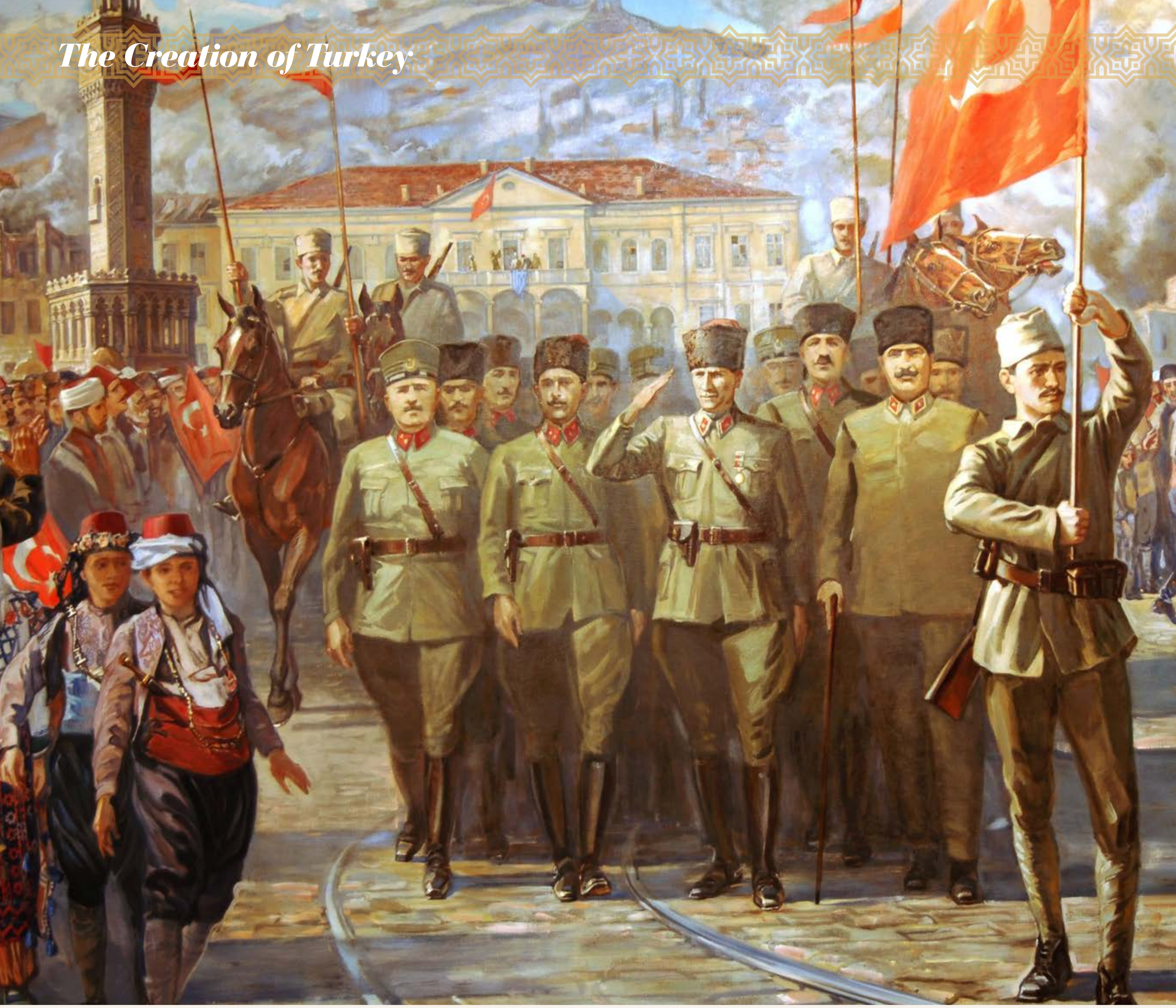
Atatürk's personal life was just as dramatic as his professional one

Atatürk's magnetic draw seemed to extend not only to his colleagues and allies, but also to the women in his life. His first love was the Greek Eleni Karinte, who fell in love with him while he was still a student. Little is known of the relationship, but it still inspired a play. Fikriye Hanım was the next woman in his life, and was actually his cousin, though not related by blood. Fikriye was head-over-heels in love with Atatürk, even divorcing her husband and moving in with him as his personal assistant. However, Atatürk met Latife Uşaklıgil, who also fell in love with him, so they were married. Latife became furiously jealous of Fikriye and demanded she leave the house, devastating Fikriye. Official accounts state that Fikriye then shot herself with a pistol Atatürk gave her as a gift, but there are suspicions it was actually murder. The marriage between Atatürk and Latife did not last long, and they were divorced less than three years after marrying.

Atatürk, it seems, had a difficult relationship with women his whole life. He, however, appeared to adore children. He did not have any children of his own, but he adopted several children: one boy and anywhere from six to 12 girls. One of these girls, Sabiha Gökçen, went on to become the world's first female fighter pilot.



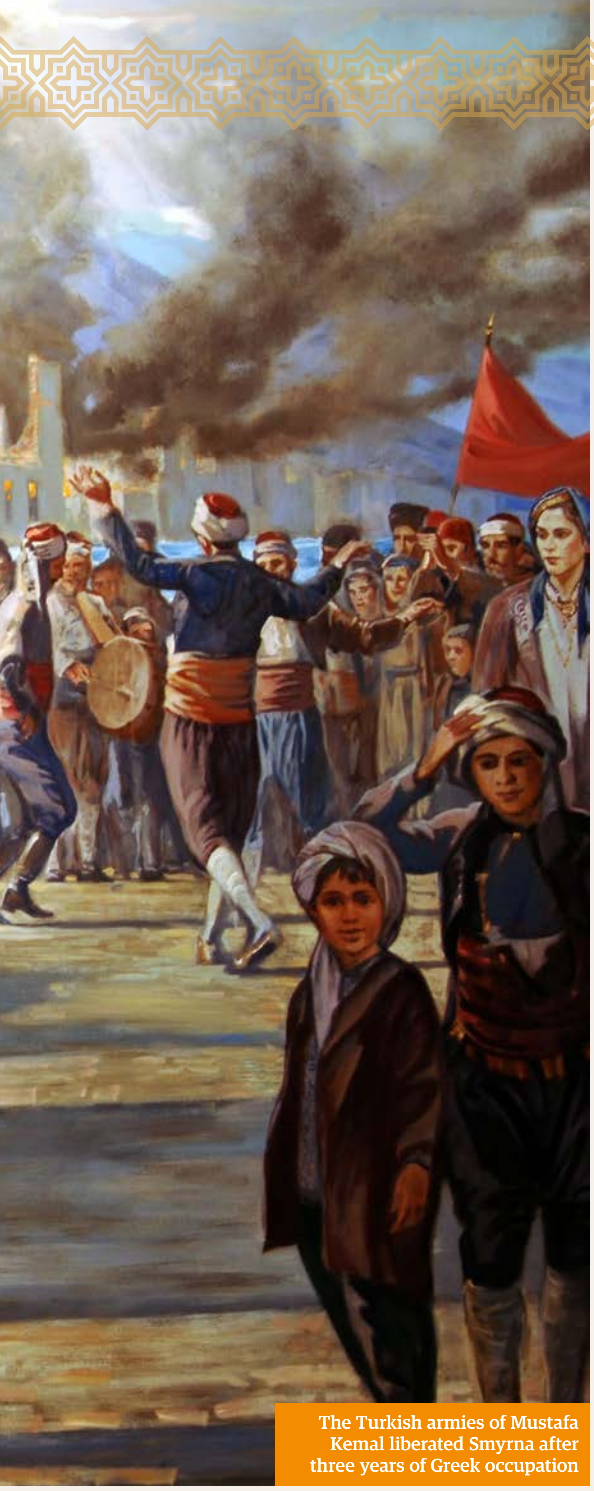
The premier's love triangle became the subject of a novel written by Salih Bozok, Atatürk's close friend



THE CREATION OF TURKEY

From humiliating defeat to revolutionary rebirth, discover how modern Turkey arose from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire

Written by Scott Reeves



The Turkish armies of Mustafa Kemal liberated Smyrna after three years of Greek occupation

Mehmed VI departed the back door of his palace in November 1922 as his empire collapsed around him

> "THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE HAD LASTED FOR 625 YEARS, BUT WHEN THE END CAME, IT WAS RAPID"

On 17 November 1922, Sultan Mehmed VI boarded a warship belonging to his former enemy. The British ship HMS Malaya had spent the post-war years stationed in Constantinople as part of the Allied force occupying the Ottoman capital. Once its important passenger was on board, Malaya steamed through the Sea of Marmara and into the Mediterranean, stopping at the British base in Malta to allow the sultan to disembark. Mehmed would never set foot in his homeland again. The last Ottoman ruler was now an emperor without an empire.

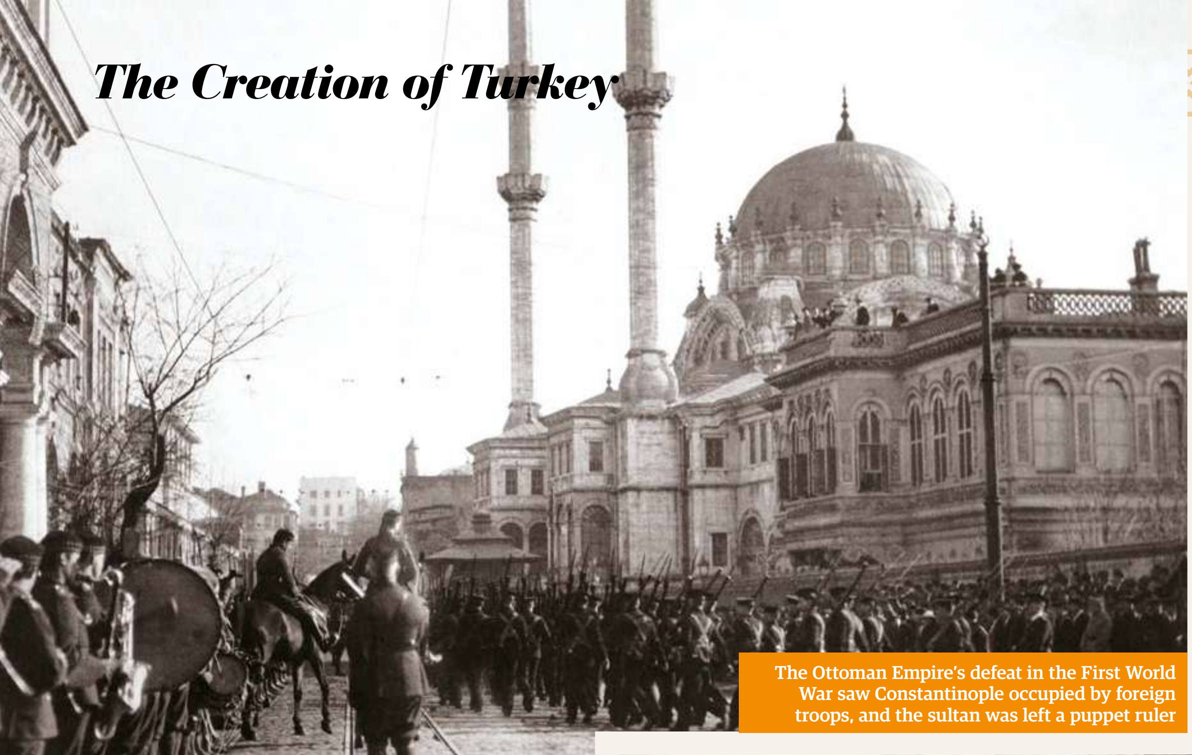
The Ottoman Empire had lasted for 625 years, but when the end came, it was rapid. The country described by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia in 1853 as "the sick man of Europe" had been ailing for some time, but the fatal blow was dealt when the Ottoman government chose to ally with Germany and the Central Powers upon the outbreak of the First World War. As a representative of the losing side, the Ottoman minister of Marine Affairs, Hüseyin Rauf, found himself going into armistice negotiations with the British on board HMS Agamemnon on 27 October 1918 in a position of weakness. He capitulated to almost all the British delegation's demands, acquiescing to the demobilisation of the air force, the surrender of any remaining garrisons outside Anatolia and a retreat to pre-war borders in the Caucasus.

The Allies were allowed to occupy forts along the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosporus, ensuring they had free access to the Black Sea, and retained the right to occupy any Ottoman territory "in case of disorder" - a vaguely defined phrase that allowed them to take advantage. Within two weeks of the armistice going into effect, British and French troops were garrisoned in Constantinople.

Fighting broke out in what would become known as the Turkish War of Independence on 15 May 1919, when Greek armed forces landed in Smyrna (now Izmir) on the west coast of Anatolia. The Greeks were acting on a promise of territorial gains from other Allied leaders made during the war, but the seizure of the city used the armistice's shadowy pretext of preventing disorder as justification. Turkish opposition was immediate - Hasan Tahsin became a national hero after being identified as the man who fired the first bullet against the invaders - but such resistance simply gave Greece an excuse to push deeper into Anatolia.

Over a year later, on 10 August 1920, Mehmed Hâdî, Rıza Tevfik and Reşat Halis signed the Treaty of Sèvres on behalf of the sultan and the Ottoman Empire. Under its terms the Ottoman armed forces were restricted in size, and the Allies were given powers to control the Empire's finances. However, the most controversial aspect of the agreement was its territorial clauses. The Ottoman Empire was restricted to Anatolia only, slicing its size by two-thirds compared to the pre-war borders. The Kingdom of Hejaz (modern-day Saudi Arabia) and Armenia were recognised as independent sovereign states, but the majority of former Ottoman territory was carved up among the Allies. Britain was given a League of Nations mandate to control Palestine and Iraq, while France took over Syria and Lebanon. Greece was granted Thrace. Already-occupied Smyrna, while technically remaining part of the Ottoman Empire, was put under Greek control prior to a plebiscite on whether the Smyrnans wished to join Greece permanently. The Dodecanese Islands were handed over to Italy. Much of the Anatolian rump that remained under Ottoman rule was sliced into zones of influence. Vast swathes of the southwest were placed under Italian control, while the southeast was influenced by the French. The Dardanelles strait was made an international waterway and certain ports were declared free zones of international importance.

As peace treaties go, the Treaty of Sèvres was so harsh that it made the infamous Treaty of Versailles look positively friendly. The Allies may have imposed high reparations payments on Germany, but at least the Berlin government was allowed to keep control of its own economy, and German territorial losses were nowhere



The Ottoman Empire's defeat in the First World War saw Constantinople occupied by foreign troops, and the sultan was left a puppet ruler

Mustafa Kemal would be given the honorific surname Atatürk (father of the Turks) by the Turkish Parliament in 1934

Immediately after the First World War, Atatürk travelled across Anatolia uniting local resistance groups into the National Movement

> "Realising that he was losing control of his own country, the sultan recalled Kemal to Constantinople"

near as swingeing as those imposed on the Ottoman Empire.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Treaty of Sèvres was met with anger in Turkey. Although the Sultan and his government had already made clear that they were prepared to work with the Allies during the two-year armistice, the treaty gave added impetus to a growing nationalist movement that had emerged after 1918. Determined to end the occupation of Turkey, a number of high-ranking officials, politicians and military officers began an underground campaign against foreign forces on Turkish soil. Among them were Hüseyin Rauf – the former minister who had declared the Ottoman's willingness to surrender to the Allies in 1918 – and the man who would come to lead the national movement, Mustafa Kemal, who had been appointed by the sultan as general inspector of the army. Although it was Kemal's job to demobilise the Ottoman armed forces from a wartime footing, he actually worked to undermine the Allied occupation and encouraged local resistance groups to unite in a national movement.

Under Kemal the National Movement began to crystallise around Ankara, then a nondescript town in the rugged landscape of central Anatolia. The distant town was chosen because it was the base of the Ottoman Army's XX Corps and a general with nationalist sympathies, Ali Fuat. Realising that he was losing control of his own country, the sultan recalled Kemal to Constantinople, an order he ignored, and called fresh elections to the Ottoman Parliament, the legitimacy of which the National Movement questioned. The sultan's government passed a fatwa declaring members of the National Movement to be infidels, and sentencing Kemal and prominent nationalists to death in absentia. Kemal's response was to state that the Turkish National Movement, not the sultan, was now the effective government of Turkey.

Kemal had effectively declared a civil war; it was his National Movement in Ankara against the sultan's puppet regime in Constantinople. However, Kemal appealed to the wider Islamic world and declared that he had no intention of toppling the sultan. Instead he stated that he only wanted to rid Turkey of the occupying Allies. Around 100 members of the Ottoman Parliament deserted Constantinople and made their way to Ankara, offering support for the newly established Grand National Assembly, with Kemal as its president.

The National Movement also established a newspaper, Hakimiyet-i Milliye (National Sovereignty), and the Anadolu news agency. Kemal used them to proclaim good news to the Turkish people when fighting on the southern and eastern fronts came to a quick conclusion. In the south French forces moved into their sphere of influence, but encountered resistance from the National Movement and ultimately withdrew. The French had little desire to become embroiled in another international conflict and settled the dispute in the October 1921 Treaty of Ankara, ceding large areas of territory from the French mandate in Syria.

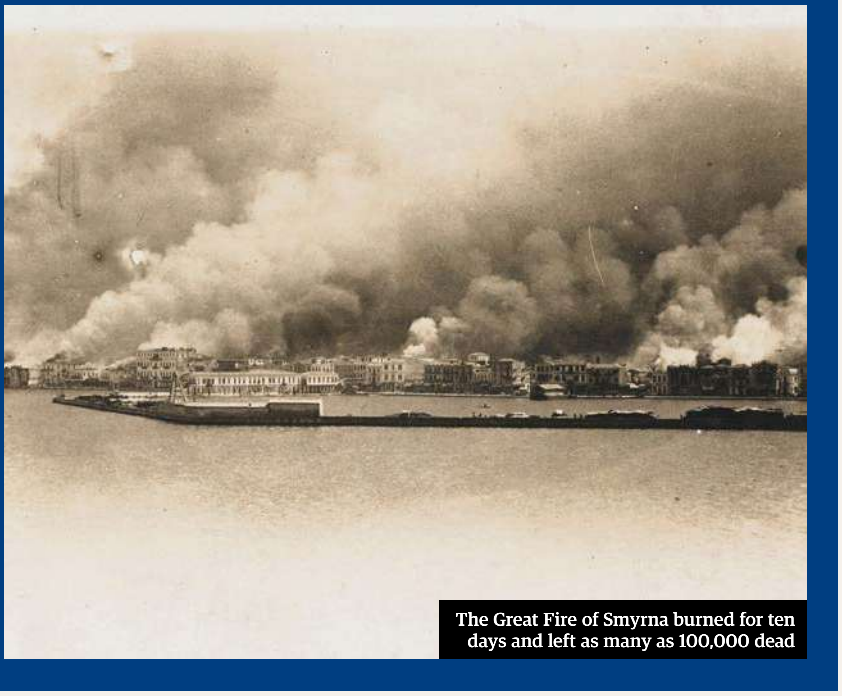
More victories were gained after a pocket of northeast Turkey was occupied after the war by the new Democratic Republic of Armenia. Under the leadership of Kâzım Karabekir, a belligerent Ottoman general who had refused to surrender to the Allies in 1918 and subsequently joined the National Movement, the Armenians were quickly pushed back beyond the Turkish border. Karabekir then pressed on into Armenian territory, capturing the cities of Kars and Alexandropol. Abandoned by the Allies and double-crossed by neighbouring Georgia, the Armenian government

THE GREAT FIRE OF SMYRNA

Tragedy struck the port city just days after the War of Independence was won

On 13 September 1922, four days after the Turkish forces of the National Movement ended the three-year Greek occupation of Smyrna, a fire began in the Armenian quarter of the city. When it was finally extinguished ten days later, up to 100,000 inhabitants were reported dead. The vast majority of the fire's victims were Christians, and the flames almost completely destroyed the Greek and Armenian sections of the city, leading to suggestions that the Turkish liberators deliberately set out to destroy Christian homes and businesses. Some Turks, including Mustafa Kemal, responded that it was the fleeing Greeks who started the fire, perhaps hoping that the Turks would be blamed.

Whatever the cause, the Great Fire of Smyrna was one of many despicable acts of violence in a particularly vicious conflict. There were reports of atrocities and genocides from both sides. Turkish forces were accused of razing majority-Greek Anatolian villages to the ground and carrying out mass killings of Armenians. Three days before the Great Fire Bishop Chrysostomos of Smyrna was handed over to a mob by Turkish soldiers, who watched on as he was beaten to death. Meanwhile, Greek forces were said to repeatedly rape and pillage as they advanced from Smyrna in 1919, then conducted a scorched-earth retreat two years later. This was not a war in which the civilian population of Anatolia got off lightly.


The Great Fire of Smyrna burned for ten days and left as many as 100,000 dead

was forced into ceasefire negotiations. During the talks, a Soviet invasion ended Armenia's short-lived independence and created the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The subsequent Treaty of Kars between the National Movement and the Armenian Soviets ceded Adjar to Georgia in return for the province of Kars becoming part of Turkey.

However, although the southern and eastern borders had been secured, the biggest threat came from the west. When Greek control over Smyrna was confirmed in the Treaty of Sèvres its armies pushed even further into the country, looking to subdue the increasingly troublesome National Movement and trying to force Kemal to accept the harsh treaty. The soldiers of the National Movement harassed the Greeks, but gradually fell back, allowing Greece to take control of a vast chunk of the west and march to within 65 miles of Ankara. However, the further the Greeks went, the more their supply lines were stretched. The longer the campaign dragged on, the greater the National Movement grew in strength, supported by arms supplied by Bolshevik Russia. More than 39,000 rifles and 63 million bullets made their way over the eastern border during course of the war.

The turning point in the War of Independence came at the 21-day Battle of Sakarya, beginning on 23 August 1921. Dug into defensive trenches on hillsides along the course of the Sakarya River near the city of Polatlı, the fortunes of both Turkish and Greek forces see-sawed as positions were stormed, captured and retaken. Although the Turks lost more men from their already numerically inferior force, the Greeks were the first to blink and withdraw to the relative safety of their previous lines. The Turkish counterattack did not come until a year later in August 1922, but

The Greco-Turkish theatre saw the Greeks dig into defensible positions until their sudden and rapid collapse

> "ALTHOUGH BORDERS HAD BEEN SECURED, THE BIGGEST THREAT CAME FROM THE WEST"

The National Movement struggled to supply its soldiers with enough arms and ammunition, and relied on materiel support from Bolshevik Russia

> "The Turkish counterattack did not come until a year later in August 1922, but victory was swift"

TURKEY'S OTHER FOUNDING FATHERS

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is known as the father of Turkey, but who were the other leaders in the War of Independence?

Hüseyin Rauf Orbay

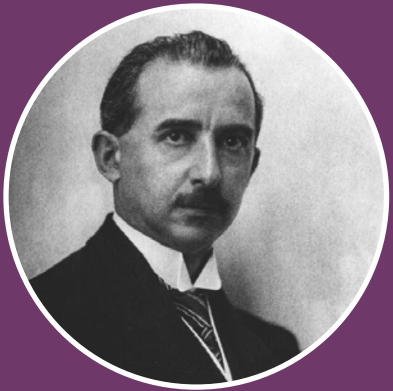
Former naval officer Rauf signed the Ottoman capitulation in 1918, but soon resigned and joined the National Movement in Ankara. Kemal trusted Rauf enough to allow him to create the Progressive Republican Party in 1924 in an attempt to introduce multi-party democracy in Turkey, but it was swiftly closed down after allegations of counter-revolutionary infiltration. Although later cleared of any wrongdoing over the affair, he was exiled for ten years.

Kâzım Karabekir

One of the Ottoman Empire's foremost generals in 1918, Karabekir was reluctant to stop fighting and quickly joined the National Movement in opposition to the Allied occupation. After success on the eastern front in the War of Independence, Karabekir began a political career, but soon fell out with Kemal and was briefly imprisoned. Karabekir resumed his political career after Kemal's death and served as speaker of the Grand National Assembly.

Mustafa Fevzi Çakmak

General Fevzi stayed loyal to the sultan after defeat in war, serving as chief of the general staff and war minister, but deserted to the Ankara government in 1920. There he was invaluable to the war effort, leading the Turkish troops at the Battles of Sakarya and Dumlupınar. Fevzi briefly served the Republic of Turkey as Prime Minister and for two decades as the chief of general staff.



Mustafa İsmet İnönü

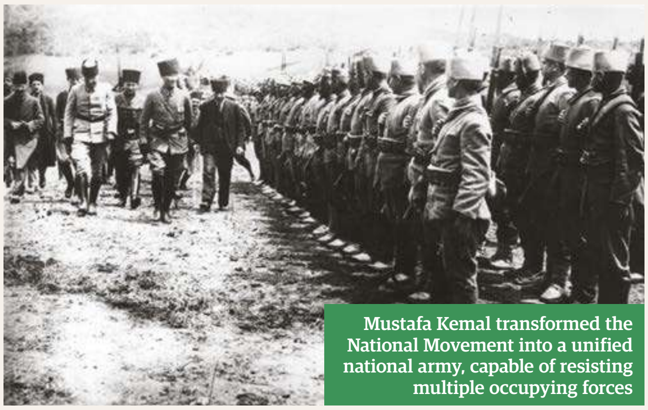
Another Ottoman general, İsmet defected to the National Movement in March 1920 and commanded the revolutionary armies on the western front against Greece. He served as chief negotiator of the Armistice of Mudanya and Treaty of Lausanne and refused to accept anything else than Turkey as an independent sovereign state. One of the foremost figures in Turkey, İsmet was selected as Turkey's second president following Kemal's death.

when it did, victory was swift – within two weeks the Greek army had collapsed and was rolled out of Anatolia.

On 3 October 1922, Mustafa İsmet – the commander of the Turkish armies in the west – arrived at the sea resort of Mudanya to begin the negotiations with British and French officials that would lead to a ceasefire. However, the situation was very different to that faced by Hüseyin Rauf four years earlier when he conducted negotiations with the Allies to end the First World War. Now Turkish forces were in the ascendancy. Whereas Rauf had quickly agreed to any terms imposed upon him, İsmet demanded that Turkey be treated as an independent, sovereign nation. This time it was the Allies who were forced to accept concessions by accepting that the Greek army would withdraw from East Thrace and drop any claims to Smyrna, and they signed the Treaty of Lausanne to that effect in July.

The Treaty of Lausanne not only brought the Turkish War of Independence to an official end, it also marked the end of the Ottoman regime. Invitations had been sent to both Kemal's Ankara-based National Movement government and the sultan's Constantinople-based government to attend the Conference of Lausanne, but Kemal and the Grand National Assembly declared on 1 November 1922 that the sultanate was to be abolished. Upon hearing of the resolution, Sultan Mehmed VI decided to leave Turkey aboard a British warship and live the rest of his life in exile, dying in San Remo in Italy three-and-a-half years later. The remaining ministers of his government

The National Movement's popularity was boosted by military success, enabling Kemal to become the de facto leader of Turkey



Mustafa Kemal transformed the National Movement into a unified national army, capable of resisting multiple occupying forces

accepted the new political reality and melted away. Many were placed on an exile list and ejected from the country.

The sultan and his closest advisers were not the only people who would be forced to leave Turkey under the new regime. Under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne, Greece and Turkey would exchange populations based upon religious identity. Around 1.2 million Greek Orthodox Christians were expelled from Asia Minor, Eastern Thrace, the Pontic Alps and the Caucasus, swapping places with 350,000 Muslims who were kicked out of Greece. The population exchange achieved what both Turkish and Greek governments desired - a stable border and the potential for peace between the two countries - but the human cost of state-sanctioned ethnic cleansing via forced migration was high. The death rate was four-times higher than normal during transportation and many newcomers faced difficulties assimilating into their new country after their ancestors had built their lives around the old ones.

On 29 October 1923 the Grand National Assembly passed a resolution that confirmed what had effectively been reality for several years: that Turkey was a sovereign republic and its leader was Mustafa Kemal. In the five years since the end of the First World War, Turkey had undergone humiliating defeat, military occupation, nationalist revolution, a war of independence and the expulsion of a fifth of its population. A new nation state rose remarkably quickly from the ashes of the 600-year Ottoman Empire.

Mustafa İsmet (left) and Mustafa Kemal (right) led a long but ultimately successful campaign against the Greek invasion of 1919

Mehmed VI celebrated the defeat of Greece on 9 October 1922, but within a month the sultan was deposed by the rival government

THE LAST CALIPH

The Ottoman prince who tried to maintain his family's grip on power

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk hoped to transform Turkey into a secular state, one in which religion and government were separate. He made a great step forward in this aim when he abolished the sultanate - in one stroke, the government was no longer headed by an overtly religious ruling dynasty.

For centuries the Ottoman Emperors were the effective leaders of the Islamic world, and they had claimed the title 'caliph' for at least 150 years. That tradition continued after Mehmed VI went into exile aboard HMS Malaya since Mehmed's cousin and heir, Crown Prince Abdulmejid, was appointed the next caliph by the Grand National Assembly in Ankara. On 24 November 1922, exactly one week after his cousin had left via the back door of his palace, Abdulmejid II set up his caliphate court in Constantinople.

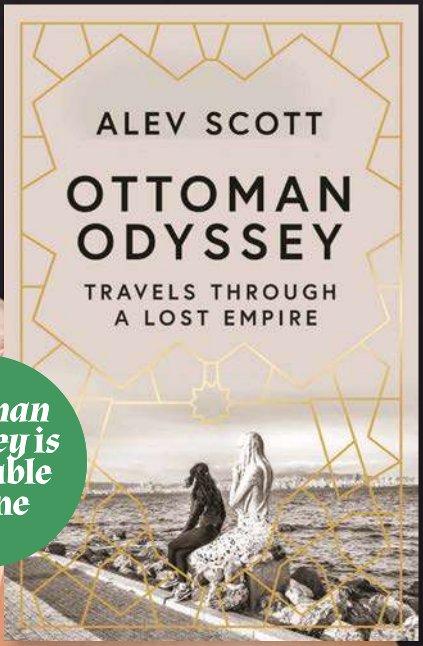
By 1924, however, Kemal felt secure enough to announce that, like the sultanate, the caliphate was to be abolished. Turkey was increasingly a Muslim country due to population exchanges and Christian genocides - in 1906 more than 80 per cent of the population of Anatolian Turkey was Muslim, by 1927 that figure had risen to 97.4 per cent - but Kemal ensured that Muslim leaders would not be able to influence his government.

Abdulmejid II followed Mehmed VI into exile, spending the rest of his life in exile and dying in Paris on 23 August 1944 as the Allies liberated the French capital from Nazi occupation.

Abdulmejid II once expected to inherit the entire Ottoman Empire, but instead was a short-lived caliph

Q&A
ALEV SCOTT

The author and journalist talks us through her modern journey around the Ottoman Empire's former realms



ALEV SCOTT

OTTOMAN ODYSSEY

TRAVELS THROUGH A LOST EMPIRE

Ottoman Odyssey is available online

Alev Scott is of Turkish and British decent, raised and studying in the UK before working as a journalist in Turkey where she chronicled the changing political climate and attempted military coup in 2016. She has since been exiled by the Erdoğan regime and currently cannot return to her adopted home.

Your book *Ottoman Odyssey* chronicles a journey around the Ottoman Empire's former lands. When you started this book, what were you hoping to find?

I was looking for social and cultural traces of the Empire but to be honest I wanted to keep an open mind about what I would find - these things are difficult to predict or even to define until you've really talked to people and understood local conceptions of history. I went through 12 countries, so it was quite a journey.

Were there many places where the influence of the Ottomans was clearly still felt very strongly?

I would say the Balkans was the most striking area in terms of Ottoman influence - both overt (the current Turkish government's restoration and promotion of important Ottoman edifices, for example) and less overt - political tensions simmering over a hundred years since the collapse of the Empire in this area. Palestine and more obvious places like Cyprus were also interesting in terms of lingering linguistic ties.

While many empires through history tended to want to impose homogeneity, the Ottoman Empire is known for remaining rather diverse. Did you find that to be true as you explored?

I did - the territories of the Empire were and are still hugely diverse, and the Ottomans for the most part allowed local religions to be practiced instead of imposing Islam. However local perceptions of the nature of this diversity vary widely, some citizens of former territories think of the Empire as tolerant, others less so.

Remnants of the Ottomans can still be found in the lands where its influence was once felt, with some wonderful structures still standing

"IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY MUSLIM AND JEWISH BABIES WERE BREASTFED BY WOMEN OF THE OTHER RELIGION"

What elements of the empire, if any, did you find that seemed to have been maintained throughout the different regions?

Until the end of the empire, a principle of tolerance coupled with a demand for strict obedience to the Sultan. Architectural style, in many places. And of course elements of language that remain today.

How much of a connection did you find between the countries you visited and Turkey?

I would say mainly in traces of language and elements of culture like cuisine - most strongly represented in Greece and much of the Levant.

Did you find that contemporary relations with Turkey were affected much by feelings about the empire?

To an extent, yes - this is something that runs rather on religious grounds, for example the Muslims in the Balkans (in Bosnia and Kosovo, primarily) identify strongly with both Turkey and their Ottoman heritage.

Did you learn anything about the Ottomans during your travels that really surprised you?

The "milk siblings" of Jerusalem really surprised me - the Muslim and Jewish babies who were breastfed by women of the other religion in the late 19th and early 20th century when the region was still under Ottoman control, as a matter of convenience between neighbouring families. It was a practice that stood as a symbol of acceptance and friendship between the two religions - something that would be astonishing today.

The book is also a chronicle of the people you met and their stories. Did you find in them some sense of a shared heritage?

Absolutely. All the elements I've mentioned - linguistic and cultural ties. Personally, as someone with Turkish Cypriot heritage, I found affinity with some people I did not expect to and that was probably the greatest gift of researching this book.

After finishing the book, did you find that your understanding of the empire had changed at all?

Yes. I had known before I set out that empire is not just about asserting power, about the political corralling of other people - but I only knew it rationally. I actually saw what that meant in real terms when I was travelling and talking to people, and understanding the past through their eyes.

© Branevgd, AndrewShiva

THE OTTOMAN LEGACY

From snacks to cities, the world continues to revel in the heritage of the Ottomans

Written by Hareth Al Bustani

TURKISH DELIGHT

According to popular legend, the 18th-century Sultan Abdul Hamid summoned the empire's most renowned confectioners to produce a sweet delicious enough to appease his various wives and mistresses. The result was the jelly-like lokum - made with flour, honey or grape molasses and nuts, heated in an open vessel and dripped into a tray, before being cut into smaller pieces. In 1777, a confectioner known as Haci Bekir opened a sweet shop in Istanbul. After the discovery of starch, he swapped this into his lokum recipe instead of flour, adding sugar. The result was an instant hit, spreading to London via a British traveller, and later debuting at the Vienna Fair in 1837.

1777 den beri
HACI BEKIR®
Real
DELIGHT
CONFISEUR
HADJI BEKIR
Net : 325 g e
Produced by - Produit par

YOGHURT

Nomadic Central Asian Turks produced yoghurt as far back as the 11th century, and used it to treat a variety of medical symptoms, from indigestion and cramps to sunburns. It remained a popular staple throughout the Seljuk and Ottoman eras – and was even gifted to King Francoise I of France, who suffered with severe diarrhoea, later dishing it out to his own troops. In the early 20th century, during the Balkan Wars, a doctor called Isaac Carasso living in Thessaloniki, fled to Barcelona – where he started selling yoghurt to treat mass indigestion among the local children. His son, Daniel, founded Danone, a company in France, creating the first yoghurt factory in 1932.

KEBAB

Kebabs have long remained an international staple – with Greeks cooking meat on skewers almost 2,000 years ago. Ottomans cooked mutton or goat cag kebabs on a horizontal skewer in front of a wood fire. Served at weddings and private functions, these would be left to rest for up to 24 hours before roasting, then cooked on a rotated skewer, sliced into smaller pieces and served on lavash flatbread with tomato, onion, and green pepper. In the 19th century, a vertical rotisserie was invented in Bursa, paving the way for the popularisation of Doner kebabs in 1970s Berlin, as well as the Arab shawarma and Greek gyros sandwiches.

Coffee

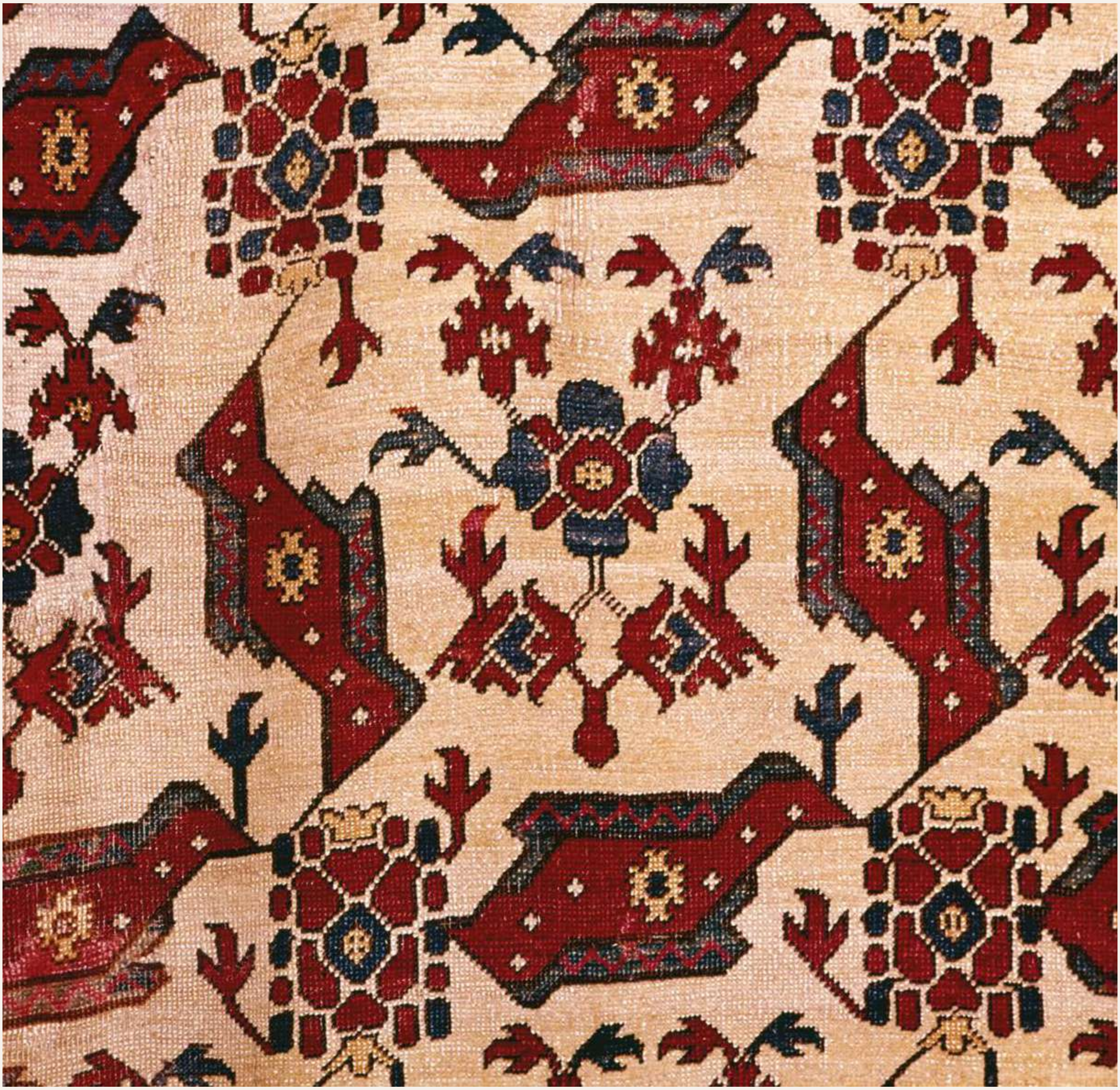
First discovered in Ethiopia, by the 14th century coffee had become immensely popular in Yemen. However, the 16th century Turks devised a unique, elaborate way of preparing the drink, by grinding up Arabica coffee beans, adding water and simmering it to a boil in copper coffee pots three times. Under the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, Istanbul developed into a world-leading coffee hub, as the once-palatial custom worked its way down to the masses. Connoisseurs would either buy coffee from a market vendor, drink it in mosque courtyards or visit atmospheric coffee houses, to watch theatrical performances. From here, coffee very quickly worked its way to Europe, via Italy.

THE MOSQUES OF ATHENS

Built as a temple to Athena in the 5th century BCE, the Parthenon sat atop the ruins of the Acropolis. When the Ottomans conquered Athens in 1456, they converted it into a mosque, adding a minaret atop. Elsewhere, in the Roman Agora, they built Fethiye Mosque over the ruins of a Byzantine basilica, in dedication to Mehmet the Conqueror. After Greece secured independence, they destroyed the Ottoman additions to the Parthenon. Fethiye Mosque, meanwhile, was converted into a military bakery, before being used to safeguard antiquities. It has since been restored and opened to the public. Another Ottoman addition, Tzistarakis Mosque (left), is now the Museum of Greek Folk Art.

MOSTAR'S OLD BRIDGE

The Ottomans developed the frontier town of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina's valley of the Neretva River in the 15th and 16th centuries. With a healthy mix of Muslims, Christians and Jews living side-by-side, it blossomed into a dynamic Ottoman urban centre – where mosques, churches and synagogues intersected, alongside Ottoman neighbourhoods, houses and bazaars. The pinnacle of the city's architectural and cultural confluence was the Old Bridge, a masterpiece of engineering linking two parts of the city over the river. Though this symbol of Mostar's unity was deliberately destroyed during the bloody Croat-Bosniak war, it was later reconstructed – a rare example of UNESCO encouraging the reconstruction of destroyed monuments.

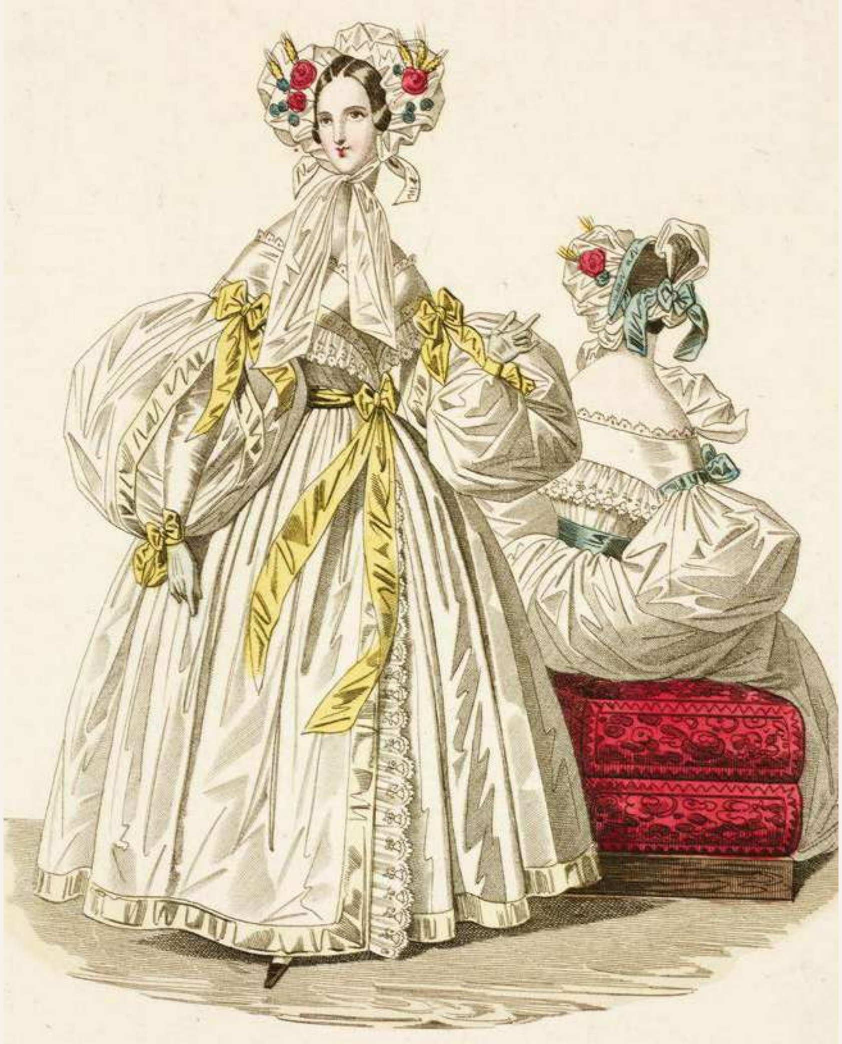


TURKISH CARPETS

Long before their conversion to Islam, the Turks of Central Asia pioneered the knotted pile carpet, sold across Western Asia and as far as Spain. During the Ottoman era, rugs were made with exquisite craftsmanship, adorned with meticulous explorations of colour and form, complete with floral motifs. The empire's 16th-century military exchanges with Persia also introduced it to Safavid medallion patterns, inspiring designs such as the star of Ushak. Others incorporated geometric patterns, or abstract floral motifs resembling birds, usually in red and blue, over a white background. Italian nobles often had Ottoman rugs made for palaces and churches, bearing their coat of arms, sparking a fascination that continues to this day.

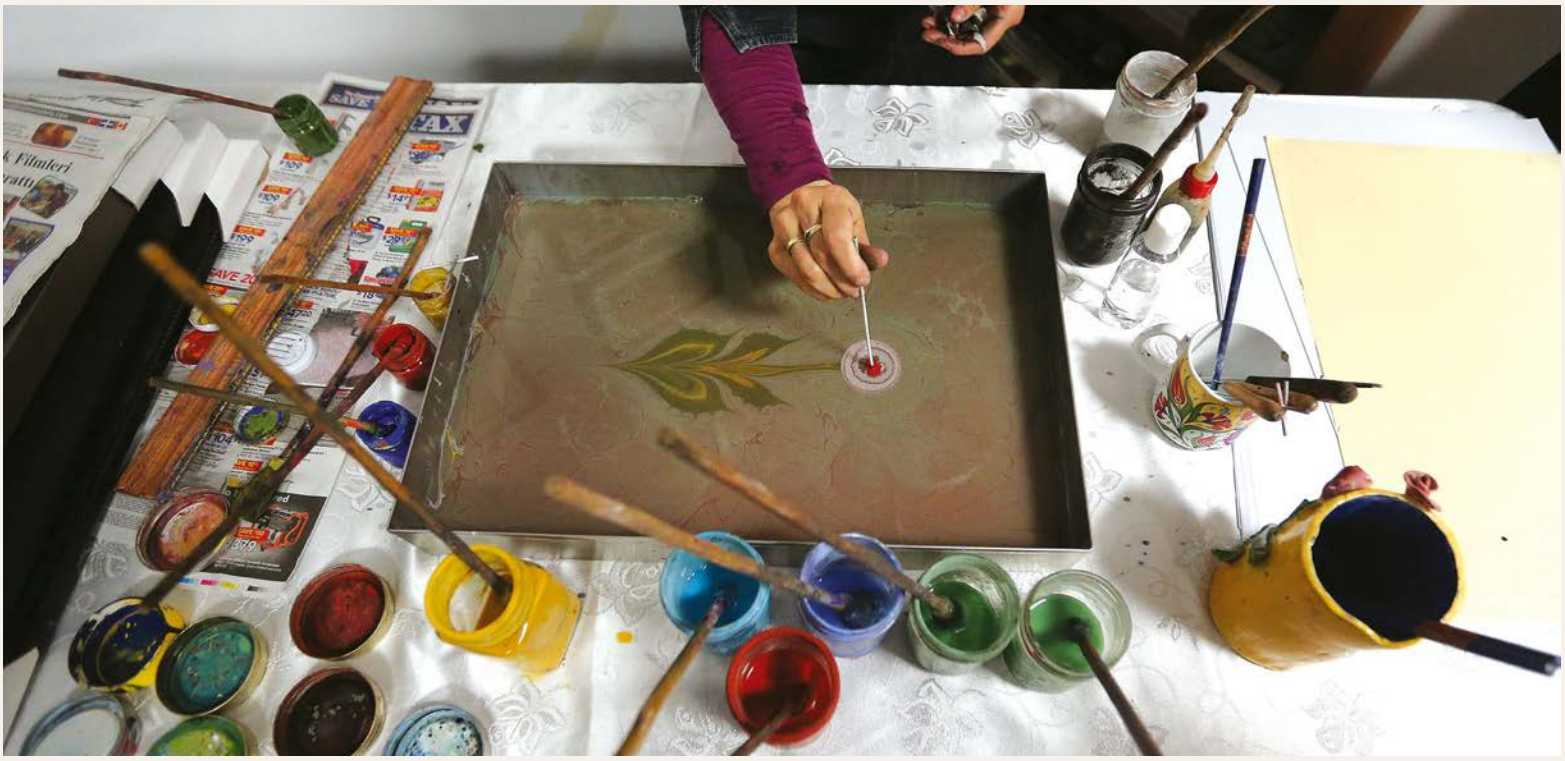
OTTOMANS

An Ottoman is the armless and backless seat, generally upholstered and padded, which was introduced from the Ottoman Empire into Europe in the 18th century. Invented as a large piece of furniture, stretching across three walls, they were later made small enough to fit in a corner, and then the centre of a room. They became a staple of private members' clubs, with increasingly creative designs; circular or octagonal, sometimes with arms dividing the piece into sections, or a central padded column to lean on, with a plant or statue atop. A hinge was also fitted, to create storage space – a feature built into many modern divan bed sets.



EBRU

Ebru is the Ottoman art of paper marbling, developed in the 16th century, which involves sprinkling and brushing colour pigments into a pan of oily water, before transferring the design to paper. It was traditionally used to produce decorative inner-covers in bookbinding. Artists extract the colours from natural pigments, before mixing them with ox-gall, a natural acid, using them to create elaborate, hypnotic designs. Popular imagery includes flowers, foliage, latticework, mosques and moons. The art is transferred from master to student orally, regardless of gender or ethnicity, and it takes two years to reach a basic level of skill. Brushes, combs and awls – stainless steel devices made of needles, nails and strings – are all used to different effect.

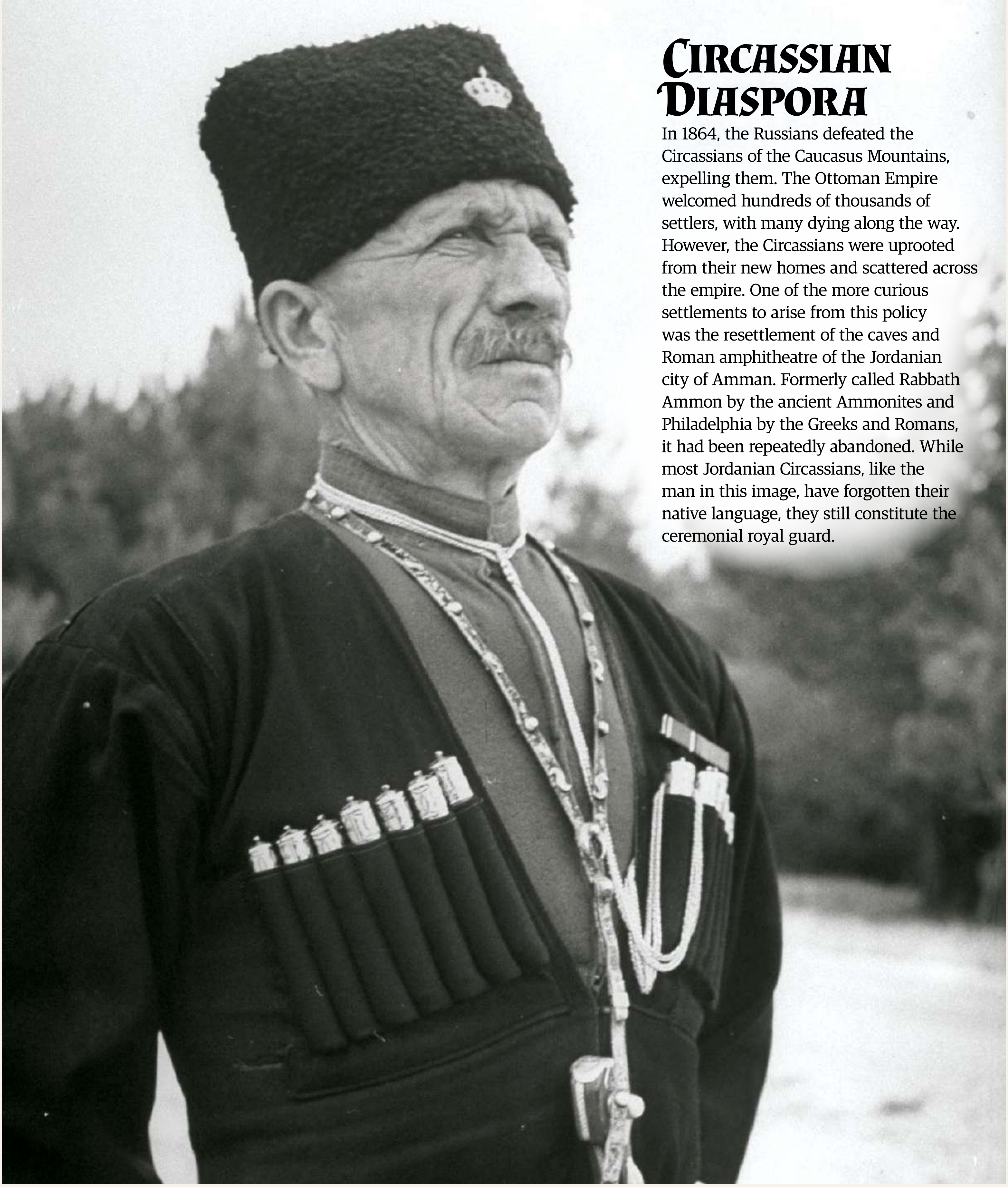


ZENNE DANCERS

At the start of the 19th century, Ottomans considered it improper for women to dance in public. However, Istanbul alone boasted around 600 male belly dancers, who performed in women's clothing. Considered a degrading profession, most of these were of Greek, Armenian or Jewish descent. While older dancers toured from Syria to Egypt, performing in taverns, young boys danced in the palace. When Ataturk formed the modern Turkish nation in 1923, he outlawed the practice, paving the way for the instantly recognisable form of heteronormative, orientalist belly dancing – pioneered by Egyptian club owner Badia Masabni. However, the boys continued to dance in rural areas, and have enjoyed a recent renaissance in modern Istanbul.

FEZ

While some claim the red felt Fez, also known by the Arabic Tarboosh, is of ancient Greek design, tradition dictates it was invented in its namesake city of Fez, in Morocco. In the early 19th century, Sultan Mahmoud II began importing the hats from North Africa, before building factories of his own – adopting the fez in an attempt to modernise Ottoman national dress and uniforms. Previously, headgear had been a clear indication of social class, with elites and royals wearing enormous turbans, and colour symbolising religious beliefs. While the fez had an equalising effect across social strata, ironically, Ataturk later outlawed it as a symbol of traditionalism. Regardless, it remains popular in Morocco to this day, and has spawned similar designs, such as the Southeast Asian Songkok.



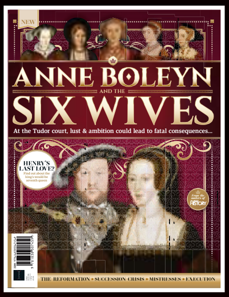
CIRCASSIAN DIASPORA

In 1864, the Russians defeated the Circassians of the Caucasus Mountains, expelling them. The Ottoman Empire welcomed hundreds of thousands of settlers, with many dying along the way. However, the Circassians were uprooted from their new homes and scattered across the empire. One of the more curious settlements to arise from this policy was the resettlement of the caves and Roman amphitheatre of the Jordanian city of Amman. Formerly called Rabbath Ammon by the ancient Ammonites and Philadelphia by the Greeks and Romans, it had been repeatedly abandoned. While most Jordanian Circassians, like the man in this image, have forgotten their native language, they still constitute the ceremonial royal guard.

NEW
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
GREATEST EMPIRES
Chart the rise and fall of history's most powerful states
DISCOVER THE EMPIRE ON WHICH THE SUN NEVER SET
AZTECS • OTTOMAN • ABBASID

Discover how the greatest empires in history were forged

NEW
HISTORY OF WAR
KOREAN WAR
THE DRAMATIC STORY OF DECADES OF CONFLICT

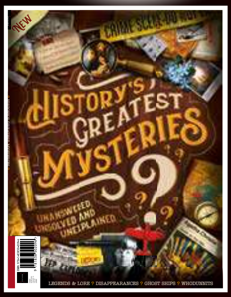

ANNE BOLEYN AND THE SIX WIVES

NEW
STALIN
HITLER VS STALIN

NEW
HISTORY OF WAR
DUNKIRK
THE EVACUATION • KEY PLAYERS • THE AFTERMATH

NEW
SCANDALS OF THE WINDSORS
The rumours and romances that threatened to ruin the royal family

Explore the disasters that have threatened the British monarchy


NEW
HISTORY'S GREATEST MYSTERIES
UNANSWERED, UNSOLVED AND UNEXPLAINED

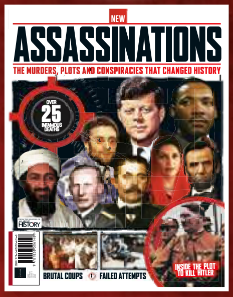
NEW
ALL ABOUT HISTORY ANNUAL
The events, people & civilisations that changed the world

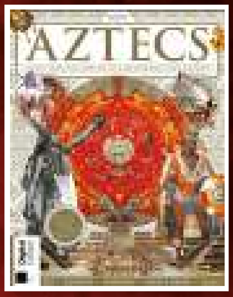
HENRY VIII
Inside the royal court of the unexpected Tudor king

NEW
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
US PRESIDENTS
Discover the iconic leaders who shaped history

HISTORY OF WAR
NEW
HITLER AT WAR
EXPLORE THE RISE AND FALL OF HISTORY'S GREATEST MONSTER
BATTLES ✻ STRATEGIC MISTAKES

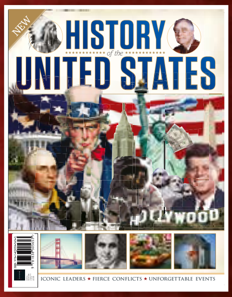
Chart the rise of Hitler and learn how he set Germany on the path to war


NEW
ASSASSINATIONS
THE MURDERS, PLOTS AND CONSPIRACIES THAT CHANGED HISTORY
BRUTAL COUPS • FAILED ATTEMPTS
INSIDE THE PLOT TO KILL HITLER



NEW
ALL ABOUT HISTORY
TUDORS
Discover the legendary period of British history and the people who shaped it

NEW
GEORGIANS


NEW
HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
HOLLYWOOD

✓ Get great savings when you buy direct from us

✓ 1000s of great titles, many not available anywhere else

✓ World-wide delivery and super-safe ordering

STEP BACK IN TIME WITH OUR HISTORY TITLES

Immerse yourself in a world of emperors, pioneers, conquerors and legends and discover the events that shaped humankind

Delve into the myths and monsters of ancient Greece

Follow us on Instagram @futurebookazines

FUTURE

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

Magazines, back issues & bookazines.

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE UP TO 61%

Delivered direct to your door
or straight to your device

Choose from over 50 magazines and make great savings off the store price!

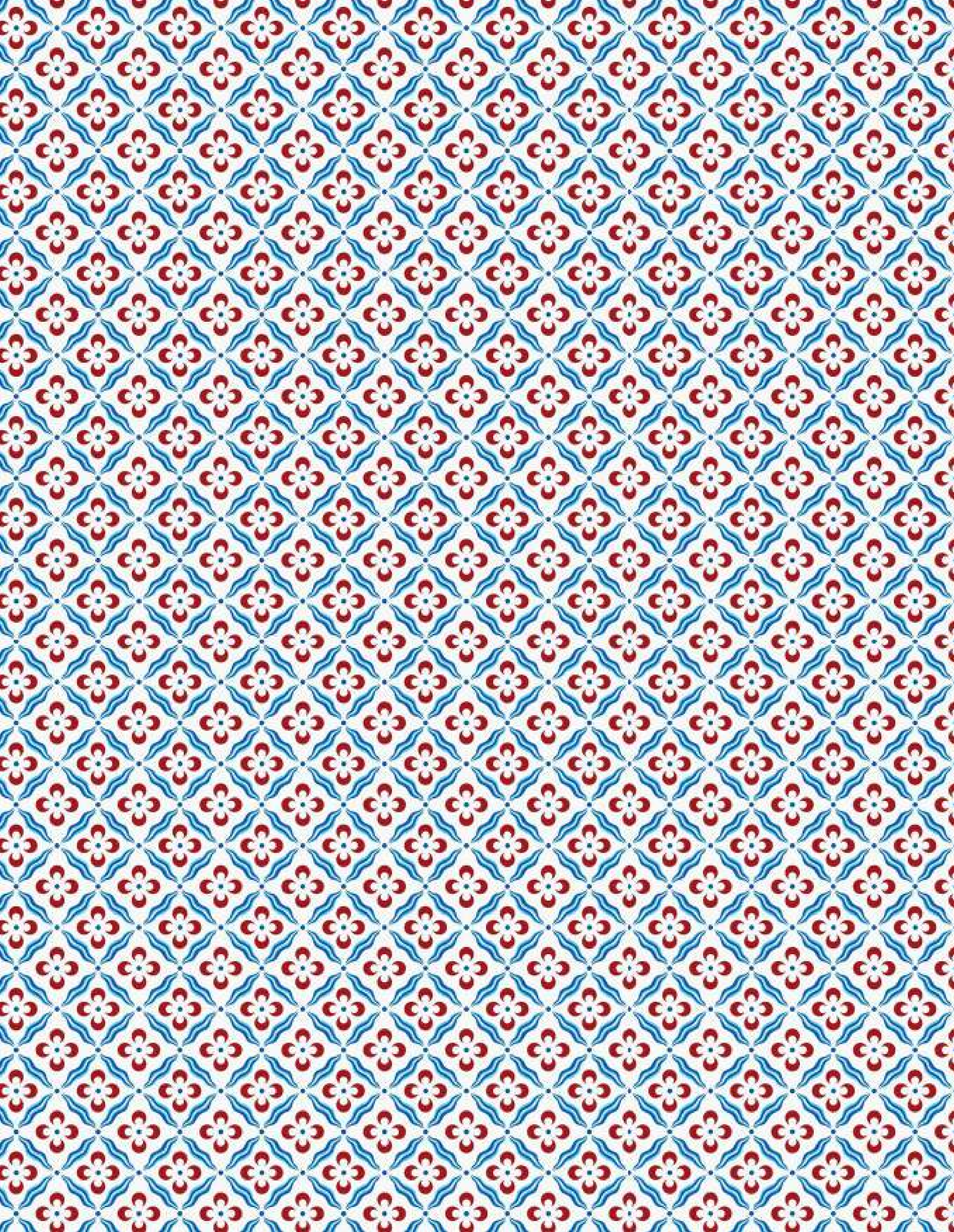
Binders, books, back issues and gift vouchers also available

Simply visit www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

✓ No hidden costs · Shipping included in all prices · We deliver to over 100 countries · Secure online payment

FUTURE

myfavouritemagazines
Official Magazine Subscription Store



OTTOMAN EMPIRE

THE RAPID RISE AND FALL OF AN ISLAMIC SUPERPOWER

The Topkapi Palace

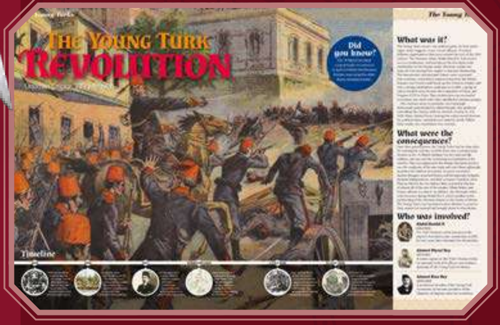
Suleiman the Magnificent

ARCHITECTURE

Go inside some of the Ottoman Empire's grandest mosques and monuments

KEY FIGURES

Meet the diverse men and women who made the Ottoman civilisation great



The Young Turk Revolution

Coffee

The Mosques of Athens

Mostar's Old Bridge

WAR AND PEACE

See how the Ottomans conquered three continents before their dramatic downfall

IMPERIAL LEGACY

How to experience Ottoman traditions – from food to furniture – in today's world

BOOKAZINE